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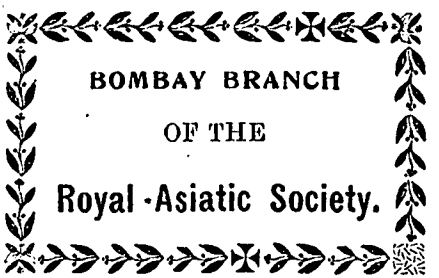

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HENRY III.

KING OF FRANCE AND POLAND:

HIS COURT AND TIMES.

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BY

MARTHA WALKER FREER,

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME,"
"ELIZABETH DE VALOIS AND THE COURT OF PHILIP II."
&c. &c.

Lilia non laborant neque nent.

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BOOK III.

(Continued.)

HENRY III. KING OF FRANCE:

HIS COURT AND TIMES.

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1575.

Progress of the war in Languedoc—Repulse of Henry before Livron—Rupture of the king's matrimonial negotiation with Sweden—The causes—Position of the House of Guise—Henry demands the hand of the princesse Louise de Lorraine—Ambassage of the marquis du Guast to Nancy—Louise de Lorraine—She accepts the hand of the king—Her interview with the comtesse de Vaudemont—Conspiracy of the duc d'Alençon to seize the person of the king—Monsieur avows his design—Coronation of the king—Disputes for precedence between the ducs de Guise and de Montpensier—Marriage of king Henry—He compels queen Louise to receive mademoiselle de Châteauneuf—He dismisses the train of the queen's ladies—Grief of Louise—Personal description of the queen by the Venetian ambassador Michel—Disrespectful deportment of mademoiselle de Châteauneuf—Henry offers her hand to the comte de Brienne—Her temporary retirement from court—Entry of Henry III. into Paris—Loyal addresses of the Parisians—Henry's deportment and pastimes—New code of etiquette—Bussy-Rabutin—Feuds of the minions—Negotiation for the marriage of Monsieur with Elizabeth queen of England—Deputation from the Huguenot and malcontent factions—Its dismissal by the king—Envoys from the Polish diet arrive in Paris—Affairs of Poland—Mission of the maréchal de Bellegarde—The diet of Stozieza—Deposition of Henry III. proclaimed by the diet—The Poles proceed to a fresh election—Marriage of Etienne Bathory, vaivode of Transylvania, with Anne Jagellon—His proclamation as king of Poland—Indisposition of king Henry—His violence and suspicions—His counsel to the king of Navarre—Death of the maréchal de Montmorency resolved upon—

Departure of the widow of Charles IX. from France—The princess Marie Isabel—Reputed *liaison* between M. de Bussy-Rabutin and queen Marguerite—Attempted assassination of Bussy—Wrath of Monsieur—His discontent and disaffection—Dismissal of mademoiselle de Torigny—Progress of Condé in Germany—Review of the court and the realm of France.

THE rapid progress of the civil war in Languedoc, meanwhile, daily increased the peril of the royal sojourn at Avignon. The maréchal de Bellegarde was still before Livron, he having been compelled to detach a strong division of the besieging troops to check the progress of Montbrun in Dauphiny. The marshal Damville had captured St. Gilles, and menaced Aigues-Mortes. The king, therefore, feeling the disgrace of so open and manifest a disregard of his person and authority, reluctantly resolved upon retracing his steps to Lyons.

On his road Henry visited Bellegarde's camp, and caused an assault to be given in his presence. The besieged, however, repulsed the attack, and afterwards discharged their artillery in defiance, knowing that the king and queen-mother were in camp. The garrison of Livron, moreover, assembled on the ramparts, and with hootings and derisive cries saluted their majesties, uttering imprecations on their policy. Henry accordingly proceeded to Lyons, where he arrived on the 10th day of January, 1575. Soon afterwards he committed the egregious mistake of commanding Bellegarde to raise the siege of Livron, under pretext that he required the troops under the marshal's command to assist at the solemnity of his approaching coronation. Livron, which had thus repulsed the assaults of Montpensier, Bellegarde, and of Henry himself, long adhered to the Huguenot cause; while its successful resistance encouraged beyond measure the revolt of more important towns in the south.

The negotiation for the king's marriage with the

daughter of the heroic Gustavus Wasa continued, and apparently tended to a satisfactory conclusion. Belon had painted the portrait of the princess, and transmitted it to France; while the king of Sweden, feeling greatly honoured that so potent a monarch as Henry III. should have asked the hand of his sister, assented to all the proposals made by Pinart, and promised a magnificent dowry with the princess. No sooner, however, was the cardinal de Lorraine dead, than Henry, rid of his fears of that great and despotic statesman, again proposed to the queen his alliance with Louise de Lorraine. He represented to his mother that the position of the family of Guise was different to what it had been during the previous reigns. The chief of Guise had now no temptation nor road leading to the almost absolute power possessed by his father, who during the reign of Henry II. was the favourite of the king and the *protégé* of madame de Valentinois; and in the reign of Francis II. the uncle of the reigning queen, and first minister of state. At his magnificent seats of Joinville or Nanteuil, the duc de Guise, Henry argued, sought a life of comparative repose and luxury in the enjoyment of his favourite pastimes of the chase and the indulgence of his taste for art. Moreover, the princess Louise was very distantly related to his subjects of Guise, she being the daughter of their father's cousin-german; so little at this period did Henry or his mother appreciate the gifts, the popular qualifications, or the soaring ambition which animated the mind of Guise. They believed that, shallow and obsequious like the rest of the courtiers, he could be provoked with impunity and appeased by a royal smile. The queen acknowledged that the demise of M. le cardinal altered the position of his kindred; nevertheless, she conjured his majesty not to break his implied faith to the princess of Sweden. She represented the inade-

quate rank of the princess Louise, the offspring of a junior prince of Lorraine; and the probable jealousies which her elevation to the throne would kindle amongst the nobles of the realm, many of whose daughters possessed the prior claim of lineage. The beauty and seductive graces of the princess dwelt in Henry's mind, especially as he had long before begun to associate Louise in fancy with Marie de Clèves. To dissipate his mother's scruples, and to induce her to consent to the alliance in preference to another she still more deprecated, the king, while vowing resolutely never to accept the hand of Elizabeth Wasa, re-commenced his attentions to the daughter of the marquis d'Elbœuf.[1] The queen, therefore, yielded a reluctant assent; while Henry, whom no sense of honour or justice ever arrested in the pursuit of his selfish impulses, despatched one Guillaume Bourrique to Stockholm to recall his ambassador, and to put an end to the negotiation, on the ground that his majesty's conscience forbad him to espouse a princess brought up in the Lutheran persuasion. Nothing could be more mortifying and even perilous than the position of Pinart. The king of Sweden feeling justly outraged, declined to accept the tardy excuse alleged for the rupture of the proposed alliance, and requested Pinart to quit Stockholm without delay; a command which the ambassador found it difficult to obey, so incensed were the people at the insult offered to the daughter of Gustavus Wasa.[2]

Cheverny states that from the first he detected the

[1] Marie de Lorraine subsequently espoused her cousin, Claude duc d'Aumale.

[2] The princess Elizabeth of Sweden, a few months after the rupture of the negotiations with France, accepted the hand of Christopher duke of Mecklenburg. The ambassador Pinart partly owed his immunity from violence to the protection accorded to him by the queen of Sweden Katherine Jagellon, sister of the Polish princess Anne, whose hand the magnates of Poland offered to Henry.

king's intention and reservations in sanctioning matrimonial overtures to the princess Elizabeth—to which Henry had assented only to gain time to reconcile the queen to the Lorraine alliance; "for," says Cheverny, "his majesty's fancy was impressed, and his affection strayed towards mademoiselle de Vaudemont. His majesty did me the honour first to confide his sentiments to myself, commanding me to reveal his desires at a suitable opportunity to the queen his mother." At first Cheverny appears to have attempted to dissuade the king from the alliance as not suitable in point of dignity: "neither did we believe that mademoiselle de Vaudemont possessed the health and constitution likely soon to render his majesty the father of a son, an event so necessary for the consolidation of the royal authority." Henry, however, soon put a stop to these discussions by vehemently asserting his resolve to espouse Louise de Lorraine, "a princess of his own nation, beautiful, agreeable, and one whom he could love and be faithful to, so as not to follow the pernicious example set by the late kings his predecessors." The marquis du Guast, who was then the favourite in the ascendant, was nominated as chief of the ambassage empowered to proceed to Nancy to ask the hand of the princess from the duke of Lorraine, and her father the comte de Vaudemont.

Never was princess more astonished than Louise de Lorraine when informed of the grandeur of the destiny offered to her. From the period of Henry's visit to Nancy, during the winter of the year 1573, her life had been diversified by few events. With Gillette de Changy, her favourite companion, Louise pursued her habitual routine of benevolence, prayer, pilgrimages to the shrine of St. Nicholas, embroidery, and study. Her stepmother still neglected her, but with incomparable forbearance Louise bore her trials. It would

seem that the homage paid her by Henry on his passage through Lorraine had vanished like a brilliant dream from her mind; or perhaps its flattering recollections had been absorbed by the anxieties which attended her attachment to prince Paul of Salms—an alliance resolutely opposed by her kindred of Lorraine, who wished to bestow the hand of Louise on François de Luxembourg, comte de Brienne. The princess, notwithstanding her seclusion and adverse position, seems to have attracted many suitors; and the marvel is that she did not espouse one of these cavaliers, and so emancipate herself from the tyranny of the comtesse de Vaudemont. The prince of Salms, the comte de Brienne, and the comte de Thoré, brother of the maréchal de Montmorency, all at various intervals sought the favour of Louise. The proposals of king Henry were communicated to the duc de Lorraine by a private missive, six hours before the arrival of the marquis du Guast. The amazement of the duke, of his consort Claude de France, and of the comte and comtesse de Vaudemont, was unparalleled. They could not believe that the young girl, so little beloved, and disregarded by her kindred, was about to ascend the most brilliant throne of Europe—to become a queen, their sovereign. The same night du Guast arrived; but it does not seem that Louise had been then informed of the momentous change in her destiny about to occur. The duke of Lorraine as yet refused belief to the alliance, and decided that, until the ambassador developed his mission and clearly explained the intentions of his majesty, the affair had better not be discussed. Du Guast remained in conference with the duke and the comte de Vaudemont during the greater part of the night. His mission was simply to exchange rings of betrothal with the princess Louise on behalf of his royal master: he was, besides, the bearer of letters from the king and

queen Catherine to Louise, and to the comte and comtesse de Vaudemont.

The morning following the arrival of the marquis du Guast, the princess Louise on awaking beheld the comtesse de Vaudemont standing by her bedside. At the sight of her dreaded stepmother the young princess sprang from her bed, and murmured an apology for the lateness of her repose. The countess made no reply; and Louise on raising her eyes was surprised at the pallor of her stepmother's countenance and the constraint of her manner.

Suddenly the countess approached. Bending the knee before the astonished Louise, she exclaimed "Madame, you are queen of France!" The princess, who believed this salutation to be ironically given, made no reply. Madame de Vaudemont, therefore, hurriedly related the events of the preceding day, announced the arrival of du Guast, and presented the letters written to the duc de Lorraine and the comte de Vaudemont by king Henry. When no longer able to refuse belief to the statements of the countess, the emotion of the princess was great, and for some minutes she wept passionately. Madame de Vaudemont then besought the pardon of the princess for the injuries she had inflicted: "It is not for myself that I plead, madame; but it is for your brothers. You are generous and merciful. Forget, therefore, the causes I have given you to hate me, and deny not your protection to my children!"[1] The princess assured her stepmother that she had already forgotten and pardoned the past. She then embraced madame de Vaudemont; but Louise appeared so embarrassed and overpowered by the intelligence imparted to her, that the former, after summoning the women of the princess, thought it best to leave her.

[1] Dreux de Radier: Vie de Louise de Lorraine. Brantôme.

Two hours later the princess Louise, standing between the duc de Lorraine and her father, granted audience to the marquis du Guast. Kneeling, du Guast presented his master's missive; and after receiving the formal assent of the princess to the king's suit, he hailed her as his queen and mistress. The princess then accepted the congratulations of the court. The heart of Louise must have throbbed as she beheld Catherine's haughty daughter, the duchess of Lorraine, make profound obeisance and kiss her hand; while the countess her stepmother knelt to perform the same homage at the footstool of the queen of France. The alliance with king Henry was accepted by Louise and her kindred without reference to her private feelings; nor does the circumstance of her known attachment to prince Paul of Salms appear to have suggested impediment to the union. Three days after the arrival of du Guast, the princess Louise, the comte and comtesse de Vaudemont, the duc de Lorraine, and the dowager-duchesse de Guise, attended by a numerous suite, set out for Rheims, where after the coronation of the king his marriage was to be celebrated.

Henry and his mother, meantime, quitted Lyons on the 18th of January, and proceeded to Rheims, traversing the province of Burgundy. The departure of the king for the south was well timed; for not only did the rebels of Languedoc boast of their victories won in the very presence of the king, but a dangerous conspiracy was formed to seize the royal person. The duc d'Alençon was privy to the plot; which, however, had not been confided to the king of Navarre. The miserable vanity of Monsieur was gratified beyond measure at the adulation offered to him by the party opposed to Henry's policy; the leaders of which, appreciating the character of the prince whom it was necessary to propitiate, applied to him the most extravagant epithets. Thus,

in allusion to the duke's baptismal name of Hercules, a manifesto appeared, in which Monsieur was alluded to as "that puissant Hercules commissioned by Heaven to exterminate the monsters who devour and oppress France." The projected enterprise was a plot to waylay and seize the king, when on his road to Chaumont —a place he must necessarily visit on his progress to Rheims. Two hundred gentlemen, partly Huguenot and partly partisans of the faction of Les Politiques, bound themselves to accomplish this daring enterprise. Their leaders were the duc d'Alençon, Beauvais le Nocle, Lafin, la Vergue Beaujeu, and Guillaume de Hautemer, sieur de Fervaques, the confidential chamberlain of the duke, and afterwards a marshal of France. The details of the conspiracy were settled and its objects specified; amongst the principal of which were, the liberation of Montmorency and the enforced acceptance by the king of certain articles drawn by Condé and the chieftains his allies, which were to be presented to his majesty on his arrival in Paris after his coronation; a petition, however, which under the *régime* of Catherine was certain to meet with contemptuous rejection. The cowardice and vacillations of the duke, however, equalled his perfidy. Before the king set out from Lyons, Monsieur was harassed by agonies of indecision; at one time declaring his resolve to confess all to his mother; at another daringly discussing the possibility of dethroning his brother, with the help of the king of Navarre and Condé; an event to be followed by his own assumption of the crown. When the king commenced his journey, Monsieur with the greatest difficulty was prevented by his favourites from flying to join Damville before Aigues-Mortes, so great was his terror—leaving the conduct of the enterprise to Fervaques. When this project proved to be impossible, Monsieur fell into such visible despondency that Fervaques, feeling assured that the duke

would betray the secret and abandon his agents to the mercy of the king, went, following the example of la Mole, and revealed the intended ambuscade to queen Catherine, previously stipulating for the pardon of all concerned.[1] This grace Catherine promised, and kept her word; for Monsieur being implicated, so frequent an exhibition of disloyalty in the heir-presumptive she deemed to be fraught with danger. The duke, however, was summoned into the presence of the king and Catherine, when the former accused him of his intended treason. The severity of Henry's tone, and the grave aspect and ominous silence of the queen-mother so terrified Monsieur, that he threw himself at the feet of his brother, made complete confession of his guilty intent with sobs and tears, and implored forgiveness. "I hold from the lips of the king Henry the Great," says the historian Mathieu, "that during the journey (to Rheims) Henry III. committed to him the guard of his person along the roads whereon the conspiracy was to have been executed, and that the said king (of Navarre) performed temporarily the office of captain of the guards, the royal coach being surrounded by his (Béarnnois) men-at-arms, while the said king rode by the window of the coach next to where king Henry sat." Testimony more complete of the chivalrous honour of the king of Navarre could not have been placed on record; the loyalty of Henri's character commanded the reverence even of his bitterest foe, and afforded him triumphs more brilliant than any he achieved on the battle-field. Monsieur throughout the journey was not permitted to approach the king; he rode on horseback at the rear of the royal cortège, surrounded by his own people, and wearing an aspect sullen and ill at ease.

The king arrived without alarm whatever at Rheims

[1] Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III., liv. vii. p. 412. Mathieu was historiographer to Henri IV.

on Friday, the 11th day of February, 1575. The solemnity of Henry's entrance into Rheims was magnificent. He was received at the principal gate of the town by the authorities and by Charles de Roussy, bishop of Soissons. The portal was adorned with heraldic devices and coats of arms, quartering the armorial bearings of the kingdom of Poland. The keys of the town were presented to Henry by a youthful damsel, who, after kissing his majesty's hand, recited the following lines:

Roi très Chrétien! qui portez la couronne
Des très hauts rois de France et de Pologne,
Je Rheims, qui suis, comme ai toujours été,
Très humble ancelle à votre majesté,
En vous gardant sans varier ma foy.
Or recevez, mon très honoré roi,
Les clefs de moi, de chacune porte
Qui pour présent, humblement vous apporte.[1]

Henry then proceeded to the cathedral, riding under a canopy of velvet carried by four principal inhabitants of Rheims. He was there received by the cardinal de Guise and the suffragan bishops of the archiepiscopal see. The harangue was pronounced by Pierre Rémy, senior canon and archdeacon. The king was afterwards conducted to the high altar to perform his devotions, where he made offering to the Holy Virgin, patroness of the cathedral, of a vessel of silver gilt, containing minute effigies of Ste. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins, the martyrs of Cologne. His majesty then retired to the archiepiscopal palace, where he took up his abode with queen Catherine and the court.

The princesse Louise[2] and her kindred arrived the

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France. Sacre de Henri III. Roi de France et de Pologne.

[2] Louise showed no elation at her new dignity. "A peine," says a contemporary historian quoted by Fontanieu, "paroissait-elle sensible à l'éclat de son bonheur. Henri fut choqué de cette prodigieuse indifférence."

following day, when the ceremony of the betrothment of the royal pair was immediately performed by the cardinal de Guise. Henry's confidential minister Cheverny had been sent to meet the princess, and to submit the articles of the marriage-contract. The dower given to the princess was ample, and in all respects similar to that assigned to her predecessor Elizabeth of Austria.[1] Cheverny met the princess in the town of Sommières, and presented her with a letter from her affianced lord, a portrait of the king, and a casket of precious jewels.[2] Nothing could exceed the elation exhibited by the princes of Guise at the elevation of another daughter of their house to share the throne. The duc de Guise alone, calm and impenetrable, scrupulously fulfilled the duties of his office, while treating the queen-elect with a respect and a distant formality which surprised though it gratified queen Catherine.

Henry's content at his approaching nuptials was, however, greatly disturbed by a dispute relative to the old subject of precedence between the dues de Guise and de Montpensier, which at the coronation of Charles IX. had been decided by Catherine in favour of the former, on the ostensible ground that the peerage of Guise was of more ancient creation. The duc de Montpensier, who had just achieved the important capture of Lusignan,[3] quitted the army without having previously requested the royal permission, and posted to Rheims to assert his pretensions. The king, how-

[1] Assignat et Evaluation du Douaire de la Reyne Louise : MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, 379-86.

[2] Mém. de Cheverny, Chancélier de France, année 1575.

[3] Montpensier had just destroyed the castle of Lusignan, and commanded the demolition of the famous tower of the Fée Mellusine. The Tour de Mellusine was given by the duke to M. de Chemeraut, who removed it carefully to Marigny, a castle he was building about six miles from Lusignan. The duke was greatly blamed for the destruction of this celebrated tower.

ever, sent an express to meet the duke when within six miles of Rheims, commanding him to waive his pretensions or to retire; but at the same time granting him permission afterwards to appeal to the court of parliament and the privy council for the final settlement of the dispute. The duc de Montpensier, therefore, decided to take no part in the ceremonies of the coronation, though his name appears in the ceremonial of the king's nuptial festivities.[1]

The coronation of Henry III. was performed February 20th, 1575, the anniversary of the ceremony of his consecration as king of Poland. The cardinal de Guise was the officiating prelate, assisted by the bishop of Metz. The coronation of Henry III. was shorn of much of the splendour which distinguished that of his ancestors. Many of the great nobles were in exile, others in arms against the sovereign; while others, again, were too impoverished by the long civil wars and the constant subsidies demanded from them, either for the royal cause or in aid of the confederates. The chief of Montmorency lay a prisoner in the Bastille; and his brothers, Damville, Thoré, and Méru, had joined the standard of revolt. Condé was a fugitive in Germany; the duc de Montpensier interdicted from appearing by the unjust denial of those privileges as a prince of the blood, afterwards so amply conceded by the parliament of Paris.[2] Turenne was absent; while the duc de Bouillon had expired a few weeks previously under every symptom of having prematurely met his fate by poison. The nobles allied to these potent chieftains, although they had not followed them in their flight or revolt, yet abstained from presenting themselves at court. Moreover, the nobles of Guyenne and Béarn, the majority of whom professed the reformed ritual, peremptorily refused to

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France, tome i.

[2] See Registres du Parlement de Paris, année 1557.

trust their lives and fortunes a second time to the mercy of Henry and his mother Catherine.

On the coronation morning Henry rose at five, and repaired privately to the cathedral to perform his devotions; this was an innovation on the pious customs of his ancestors, all of whom were accustomed to perform a midnight vigil before the shrine of St. Rémy. His majesty returned to the palace about seven o'clock, and commenced to array himself for the ceremony. This process, however, the king prolonged to such an unusual period as to occasion serious inconvenience. His majesty himself superintended the arrangement of the jewels affixed to the royal robes, and wasted several hours with Du Guast, Villequier, and Quélus, in this occupation. He then inspected the jewels to be worn by his bride-elect, the which he caused to be entirely re-arranged. The greater portion of the day was thus consumed by the king; and when at length his majesty was prevailed upon to repair to the cathedral, it was evident that the Te Deum must be omitted, and high mass postponed until late during the afternoon, against all canonical law and royal usage.[1]

Henry was escorted to the cathedral by the archbishop of Bourges, and the bishops of Laon, Beauvais, and Marseilles. He wore a rich suit of white velvet, and a mantle of cloth of silver. The sword of state was borne by the maréchal de Retz. In the royal procession were the comte de Vaudemont and his son the marquis de Nommeni;[2] and the ambassadors of Portugal, Scotland, and Venice, who were the only representatives of foreign powers present. When the crown was placed upon his majesty's head he complained that it hurt him, and in so loud a tone that his words were heard by

[1] Menin: Coronations of France. Godefroy. De Thou. Etoile: Journal de Henri III.

[2] Afterwards duc de Mercœur.

the peers around. He next made so impatient a movement, that the diadem falling forwards, was caught with both hands by the officiating prelate.[1] This incident, and the omission of the Te Deum was deemed ominous. "To all," says an eye-witness, "it seemed of most evil augury; as if Heaven willed then to indicate that the joy to be derived from his majesty's coronation was to be brief."[2] Other personages present commented unfavourably on the petulant and undisciplined temper of the king, who even at so solemn a moment could not repress his irritability.

The banquet in the evening was magnificent; but the king presided in his coronation robes, there not being time to change them for attire more suitable,[3] his majesty passing without interval from the cathedral to the banqueting-hall.

On the day following Henry proceeded to hear mass at the church of St. Rémy, and to offer votive gifts at the shrine of that great apostle. In the afternoon he held a chapter of knights of St. Michael in the cathedral. A second banquet followed, at which the queen and the princess Louise and the ladies of the court were present.

The next morning, Tuesday, February 22nd, his majesty commenced betimes to prepare for the ceremonial of his espousals. The same delay as on the coronation morning, however, occurred; for the king spent the early part of the day in adorning his bride-elect, at whose toilette he was present. With his own royal hands Henry arranged the jewels on his consort's robe,

[1] Mezeray. Brantôme. Marlot: Théâtre d'Honneur.

[2] De Thou, liv. lx. p. 249.

[3] This, again, was against all established usage. The king, when he quitted the cathedral, was always divested by the archbishop of his gloves and shirt; the which, having been touched by the holy oil, were burned, so that they might not be profaned by other use.—Marlot: Théâtre d'Honneur.

and set the diadem on her head.[1] No bridegroom-elect could seem more enamoured of the charms of his betrothed than did Henry. The king having satisfied himself as to the appearance of his bride, next condescendingly inspected and offered his advice on the rich suits to be worn by his favourites Villequier and du Guast. He then held a short conference with queen Catherine, and admitted the comte de Vaudemont to the honour of an interview.

A platform of state, surmounted by a canopy of cloth of gold, had been erected at the portal of Notre Dame de Rheims. The king was conducted thither walking between the duc de Lorraine and the cardinal de Guise, preceded by bands of musicians and by the grand-master of the household, the duc de Guise, who carried his *bâton* of office. The attire of king Henry was deemed a marvellous display of elaborate taste; and the fashion of his vestments was so novel, that all the young lords of the court, excepting the privileged band of favourites, or *mignons*, beheld themselves eclipsed. The duc de Montpensier and the comte de Vaudemont followed. Next marched the duc de Mayenne, grand-chamberlain. Then followed the bride, supported between the duc d'Alençon and the king of Navarre. The robe of Louise was of white satin sumptuously adorned and beset with gems; her mantle was of violet velvet embroidered with the *fleurs-de-lis*, the train, which was twelve yards long, being carried by the princess Catherine of Navarre, assisted by the widowed princesses of Condé and la Roche-sur-Yon—the latter being the mother of the duc de Montpensier. Catherine followed, wearing robes of black velvet, her train borne by the duchesse de Retz. The queen of Navarre came next, walking between the duchesse de

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. Dreux de Radier: Vie de Louise de Lorraine. Brantôme.

Montpensier and the widowed duchesse de Guise.[1] The ceremony of the espousals was performed by the cardinal de Bourbon; and the high mass which followed was said by the same prelate, assisted by the cardinal de Guise.

A banquet ensued, followed by a ballet and a ball. The royal pair danced a minuet, and afterwards performed a quick dance called the *Gaillarde*, to the great admiration of the spectators. The coronation and marriage of Henry III. were celebrated with a diminution even of the state and pageantry which his predecessors would separately have lavished on each of these ceremonies. The chief event worthy to be noted, in respect to this ceremonial, is the gradual appropriation which the house of Lorraine had made of all the high offices of state. The daughter of Catherine was the wife of the chief of their race; a princess of Lorraine had again been selected to share the throne of France. The grand-master of the household, the high chamberlain, the two chief chamberlains-in-ordinary, and the prelate who placed the crown of St. Louis on Henry's head, were members of the house of Guise; the mother of this "race of heroes," Antoinette de Bourbon, also present, being the aunt of the king of Navarre and of Condé. So consummate had been the tact displayed by the deceased cardinal de Lorraine during the minority of the duc de Guise his nephew, that the apparently disinterested policy of the Lorraine princes disarmed suspicion; and so lulled the jealousy of the queen, that for several years after the accession of Henry III. Catherine spoke approvingly of their moderation and devotion to the government of her son.

Henry, though he was greatly influenced by the charms of queen Louise, yet insisted that she should

[1] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France. Sacre et Bénédiction Nuptiale de Henri III. Marlot: Théâtre d'Honneur.

receive mademoiselle de Châteauneuf and confirm her appointment in the royal household. Louise testified much anger and discontent at this mandate, and boldly declared that such a demand outraged her feelings and offended her notions of decorum. The confessor of the young queen, the Jesuit Bellangreville, exhorted his royal mistress firmly to withhold her sanction to such a project, which he termed "a shameful concession to the scandalous vice of the age!"—"Madame, even if your heart were not interested in this demand, it is your duty, for the sake of our holy faith, to oppose a resistance strenuous as possible!"[1] The king, on his side, showed great displeasure at his consort's proceedings, and remarked in the presence of her father "that he deemed it strange and unexpected as possible that her majesty, who alone owed her elevation to the throne to his affection, should presume to oppose his will." Henry, therefore, commanded his consort forthwith to ratify the appointment of mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, and to accept of her services. After shedding many tears, Louise obeyed, on the earnest counsel of the duc de Guise, whom Henry sent to intimate his will to his consort. The king further determined that all the ladies and waiting-women hitherto in the service of the young queen should be dismissed with suitable presents. No exception was permitted even in favour of madame de Changy, the faithful friend of Louise during the period of her adversity. The queen in vain supplicated that at least madame de Changy might be permitted to retain her appointment; but the king ungenerously replied by intimating his opinion "that the birth and position of her former attendants were unsuitable for the household of the queen of France; while her familiarity with madame de Changy gave umbrage to

[1] Dreux de Radier: Vie de Louise de Lorraine. Vie de Renée de Rieux.

the illustrious ladies nominated to the chief posts about her majesty's person, and especially to madame de Dampierre[1] and to the duchesse de Nevers, mistress of the robes." Three weeks, therefore, after witnessing the espousals of their beloved mistress, madame de Changy and her colleague mademoiselle du Bellay, took leave and returned to Nancy, each having received a gift from the queen of the large sum of 1200 livres Tournois. Two of the young queen's favourite tiring-women, named Mousette and Pierrotte, were likewise dismissed.[2] It was, moreover, decreed by Henry that Louise should say farewell at Rheims to her immediate kindred of Lorraine. The comte and comtesse de Vaudemont, therefore, returned to Nancy at the conclusion of the coronation fêtes; they showing, however, every mark of content, as the king had promised to bestow the hand of mademoiselle de Martigues, daughter and heiress of the duc de Penthièvre, upon the count's eldest son, M. de Mercœur. The annoyance which the young queen experienced from these proceedings was such, that about two months after his marriage Henry lost a chance of offspring—a hope never more granted to him.[3]

The impression which queen Louise made on the Venetian ambassador Jean Michel has been left on record by him in a relation addressed to his senate. Justness of comprehension and acute insight into character and accuracy of detail distinguish the despatches of the envoys of the Seigniory. "The queen," says

[1] Mother of the duchesse de Retz, Jeanne de Vivonne, widow of Claude de Clermont, baron de Dampierre; a lady possessing a revenue of 300,000 livres Tournois.

[2] Comptes des Dépenses de la Maison de la Reine Louise, Epouse de Henri III., signé de sa main: Bibl. Imp. Suppl. Fr. vol. 1476. MS.

[3] Mém. de Cheverny, Chancélier de France. Brantôme: Vie de Louise de Lorraine.

Michel,[1] "is a young princess of nineteen or twenty years. She is very handsome; her figure is elegant and of middle size rather than small, for her majesty has no need to wear high-heeled shoes to increase her height. Her figure is slight, her profile beautiful, and her features majestic, agreeable, and lively. Her eyes, though very pale, are full of vivacity; her complexion is fair, and the colour of her hair pale yellow, which gives great content to the king, because that hue is rare in this country, where most of the ladies have black hair. The queen uses no cosmetics, nor any other artifice of the toilette. As for her moral virtues, she is gentle and affable. It is said that she is liberal and benevolent to the extent of her means. She has some wit and understanding, and her comprehension is ready. Her piety is fervent as that of her husband, and this is saying everything. She appears devoted to the king, and shows him great reverence; in short, it is impossible to witness a more complete union than that which now exists between their majesties. The name of the queen is Louise. She is the daughter of M. de Vaudemont, brother of the father of the reigning duc de Lorraine. This Vaudemont was cousin-german to the late duc de Guise, the cardinal de Lorraine, and their brothers. He first embraced the ecclesiastical profession, and was nominated to the bishopric of Metz, though he was never consecrated. His first wife was the sister of the count of Egmont, who lost his head in Flanders; by her he had one daughter, the present queen of France. By his second wife, who was sister to the duc de Nemours, and by his third consort, daughter of the duc d'Aumale, Vaudemont has three or four children. His eldest son the king marries in France: he is now residing at court, and has the title

[1] Relazione del Clarissimo Giovanni Michel, anno 1575. Tommasio, tomo ii. p. 239 et seq.

of duke. The second son of Vaudemont is being brought up at the court of Savoy; and since the marriage of his sister with the king of France he is there treated with great respect. King Henry greatly desired the marriage with madame Louise, for his majesty said that it was necessary for him to marry a beautiful woman; nevertheless, this union would never have happened had the cardinal de Lorraine lived."

The marriage of the king, meanwhile, greatly incensed mademoiselle de Châteauneuf. The fierce temper of this lady occasioned Henry serious disquietude. Unpropitiated by her appointment in the household of the queen, her insolent defiance at times shocked her royal mistress. At one of the balls given in honour of the royal nuptials, mademoiselle de Châteauneuf audaciously appeared in robes similar to those of the young queen, imitating even the *parure* of jewels worn by Louise. The indignation of the queen was now fairly roused. Aware that it would be useless to appeal to her consort, she quitted the saloon, and sought the presence of Catherine, to whom she related the unexampled insolence of the favourite. Catherine forthwith summoned her son, and insisted that an order should be despatched commanding mademoiselle de Châteauneuf to retire to her apartments. The following morning Catherine exiled the presumptuous Renée from court for the space of three months.[1] Henry, therefore, intensely chagrined, and yet finding that he could not easily resist the determination shown by his wife, his mother, and the duchesse de Guise to procure the dismissal of Renée from court, resolved to make a second effort to obtain a husband for mademoiselle de Châteauneuf, whose rank would be a guarantee for her permanent residence in Paris.

With his habitual disregard for the feelings and wel-

[1] Vie de Renée de Rieux: Dreux de Radier.

fare of others, provided that he could extricate himself from a difficulty, Henry fixed upon François de Luxembourg, his consort's former suitor. His majesty therefore accosted Luxembourg one day in his private cabinet thus: "Mon cousin, I have married, as you are aware, your former sweetheart; now, as this is so, I am resolved to bestow upon you mine, mademoiselle de Châteauneuf." Luxembourg responded "that he was joyous and proud that the former lady of his heart should have been exalted to so high a pitch of splendour and happiness, and therefore to have so greatly gained; nevertheless, he begged to decline the king's proposal relative to la Châteauneuf."—"It is my will," angrily rejoined the king, "that you espouse her immediately. I will myself be present at the ceremony of your marriage." The count indignantly expostulated with Henry, showing that his birth and great wealth entitled him to aspire to the hand of a lady of princely lineage and unblemished repute. The king, however, continued doggedly to reiterate his command. Luxembourg then demanded a delay of eight days. This respite Henry unwillingly granted, stating that he did so in order to give the count leisure to prepare a suitable wedding equipment for himself and his bride. No sooner, however, had the count left the presence of the king than he hastened to his lodgings, mounted his horse, and quitted Rheims, retiring into the Netherlands.[1] The cause of the sudden flight of Luxembourg soon became bruited at court; and this adventure, coupled with the previous ridicule there incurred by mademoiselle de Châteauneuf relative to the affair of Nantouillet, induced her gladly to conform to her mandate of exile for three months. At the expiration of this period Renée returned, affianced by the contrivance

[1] Journal de Henri III.—Etoile. Dreux de Radier: Anecdotes des Reines et Regentes de France.

of queen Catherine to one Antinotti, a Florentine; an alliance more suitable to her position than those to which she had previously aspired.[1]

On the 24th day of February the court quitted Rheims, and arrived in Paris six days afterwards. Henry having no inclination to perform the usual *neuvaine* at the shrine of St. Marcoul, deputed thither his grand-almoner. The king also dispensed with the ceremony of a state-entry into Paris, as the season of Lent had commenced; but drove through the streets of his capital in a coach with queen Louise and Catherine de Medici. His majesty first proceeded to the Louvre to pay a visit of condolence to the widow of Charles IX.; he then took up his abode in the hôtel de Soissons, where Henry remained until after the departure of the queen-dowager Elizabeth from the Louvre; while Catherine retired to her new hôtel des Tuileries.

The first fortnight of Henry's sojourn in his capital was employed in receiving the addresses of the public bodies, who presented him with loyal congratulations and welcome. The majesty and affability of the king's manner usually exercised great influence over those but casually admitted to his presence; the municipality and the various guilds of the capital therefore retired from the royal presence satisfied and propitiated by the moderation and orthodoxy of Henry's language. Each day Henry, with his queen, attended by Villequier and du Guast, visited in succession the churches of Paris, offering bountiful alms. The court preachers, moreover, delivered a sermon daily in the presence of the court, at which the king and the two queens were generally

[1] This Antinotti was stabbed by his wife, for his infidelity, with her own hand, in 1577. Renée subsequently found another cavalier bold enough to espouse her in Phillipo Altoviti, seigneur de Castellane. Altoviti fell in a duel with the grand-prior of France, Henri d'Angoulême, natural son of Henry II., in 1586.

present. The Parisians, meanwhile, surveyed the piety of their monarch with edified approbation; and believed for a season that the halcyon times of St. Louis were about to revive, when the day was divided into three equal portions by that orthodox king, severally devoted to prayer, politics, and study.

Towards the end of the month of February, Henry issued a fresh code of etiquette for the regulation of the palace. The French during former reigns had been always freely permitted to see their monarch dine in public; the entrance of the people into the banqueting-hall being impeded by few restrictions, and those of the simplest and most obvious kind. Under the new *ordonnance* the table at which the king dined was to be guarded by a barrier, within which no personages but the lords of the household were permitted to enter. A variety of regulations was also prescribed, defining those persons who might now avail themselves of the ancient privilege. In public the person of the king might not be approached within a certain stated distance; no petitions were to be presented, excepting on a certain day weekly appointed by his majesty. The king rode about Paris in a closed chariot with his wife, and appeared annoyed if compelled by the *vivas* of the populace to show himself. The Parisians were greatly disappointed that their king did not ride forth on horseback magnificently accoutred, as his brothers had done, in the fashion of Francis I., who for centuries after his decease was the *beau ideal* of a finished courtier, and a popular monarch in the opinion of his countrymen. The studies of the king were at this period confined to three books—his missal, from which a few pages indifferently selected were read to him nightly by de Villequier; Machiavelli—which his majesty himself daily perused during half an hour after his *lever*; and the poems of Desportes, whose impure verse fur-

nished the king and his favourites with matter for hilarity, and for the fabrication of the coarse *bons-mots* in vogue at court. Occasionally Henry was enlivened by the recital of some encounter between a cavalier of the court and one of his *mignons*, whose bragging and duelling propensities caused them to be regarded with terror by all peaceful individuals. As for the duc d'Alençon, he moved amid this motley assemblage smiling, lying, and plotting; cringing when in the presence of the king and the queen-mother; exasperating his sister Marguerite more and more against her brother Henry; and acting the part of a treacherous friend towards the king of Navarre, whom he constantly incited to revolt with the full intent of betraying. Monsieur had also his *mignons*, the chief of whom was the brave Bussy d'Amboise,[1] noted for his wit and profanity of speech. Amenable to no law, an accomplished swordsman, profligate and insolent, Bussy d'Amboise fought for and won a special immunity at court; and succeeded even in casting a shield over his royal master which warded from the duke many a thrust. His colleagues in the favour of the duke were MM. de Simiers, Fervaques, Beauvais, and others, whose counsels were of course given in opposition to that of Henry's *clique* of favourites.

The negotiation for the marriage of Monsieur with the queen of England continued. Catherine, aware of the distrust subsisting between her sons, did all in her power to promote the alliance and to propitiate Elizabeth. The despatches of the queen to Fénélon on this subject are *unique* of their kind; she therein discusses the personal appearance of Monsieur,[2] and is

[1] Louis de Clermont, son of Louis de Clermont Bussy d'Amboise and of Catherine de Beauvau dame de Moigneville, of the powerful house of Clermont d'Anjou.

[2] The ambassador Giovanni Michel writes: "Monsieur est petit de

lavish in her regrets that he is not so handsome in person nor so *spirituel* and *gracieux* as king Henry: nevertheless, her majesty desires the ambassador to contradict the report of the duke's excessive ugliness; "for," says Catherine, "although Monsieur's personal gifts are not now great, yet his features denote his illustrious descent."[1] Elizabeth, who must have cordially despised the character of her royal suitor, dexterously encouraged the suit, pending the development of her policy in Scotland; as she subsequently supported his designs on Flanders to ward from her realm its invasion by her arch-enemy Philip II.

At the suggestion of queen Catherine the court assumed a more united and decorous aspect to receive the great deputation from the Huguenot faction, allied with that of Les Politiques, which during the month of April, 1575, entered Paris to memorialize the king. The answer given to this important petition decided the character and policy of Henry's reign. The clauses of the document were ninety-two in number. The signatures of Condé, Damville, Turenne, la Noue, Thoré, and all the chieftains in revolt were attached, who pledged themselves, on the acceptance of the articles, to disband their armies and to make submission to the king. They demanded specially, on the part of the Huguenots, complete freedom of worship, with the privilege of convoking synods and consistories; and that the reformed church should be only amenable to and ruled by her own ministers. The demands made in common by both factions were, the convoca-

taille; mais d'une forte complexion, carré et apte à porter toutes sortes de fatigues corporelles; il est en cela le contraire du roi. Il n'a jamais été en amitié avec ses frères, notamment avec le roi actuel, et avec sa mère." La faute est en celle-ci; car elle distinguoit trop l'un, et l'aimoit comme son œil droit, tandis qu'elle abaissait l'autre de son mieux."

[1] Lettre de la Reyne-mère à M. de la Mothe-Fénélon: MS. de St. Germain.

tion of the States, the reduction of the imposts to their average rate during the reign of Louis XII., the reformation of the licentiousness of the court, and the overthrow of the pernicious system of favoritism.[1] Such demands, however desirable for the prosperity of the commonwealth, were odious to the king and his courtiers. The petition was presented to Henry in the presence of his mother, the duc d'Alençon, the king of Navarre, Bellièvre, de l'Aubespine, Villequier, and others. The deputies were then conducted into the ante-chamber of the royal apartment, while the secretary of state, M. de Sauve, read aloud the petition. They were then re-admitted to the audience-chamber, when Henry addressed them in a fluent manner, and reproached the deputies for the treason and manifest insincerity of their chieftains; he then dismissed them with the promise that their prayer should be considered. The envoys, however, had still to present a supplementary article concerning the massacre of Paris—comprehended in the demand that its authors and abettors should be punished by removal from participation in state affairs. This article, being specially aimed at the queen-mother and the ducs de Nevers, de Guise, and others, created the greatest indignation. Catherine therein beheld the realization of the opinion she had long cherished, that her own exile and disgrace would follow the admission of the Huguenot chieftains to the councils of her son. This conviction, therefore, decided the fate of the petition—power being Catherine's sole object, she steadily severed every bond with which it was sought to fetter her. The king, therefore, at his mother's dictation, intimated, after the lapse of a few days, that all the concession he was prepared to make was to nominate sixteen towns in his realm wherein the Protestants might assemble for public worship; and

[1] De Thou, liv. lx. p. 250, et seq.

in which they should hold the principal offices, provided that all the places seized during the present war were restored in the same condition as when captured. Other minor concessions were added; and the deputies received permission to retire and consult the chieftains, leaving two of their number in Paris—a courteous mode of dismissing the ambassage. The war, nevertheless, continued without intermission, the royal generals receiving commands to pursue the campaign vigorously; nor to arrest their progress during any reported armistice, unless it was notified by the court.

The departure of the deputies was followed by the arrival of envoys from the Polish diet, who presented the king with letters from that august assembly. Their tenor was respectful and humble, excepting when treating of Henry's ignominious flight, which the deputies alluded to as a disgrace to the people of Poland, and to the majesty of so puissant a monarch. The diet prayed the king to return to Warsaw without delay; stating that the realm was in imminent peril from the enmity of princes, who resented the rejection of their pretensions to the diadem of the Jagellons; that the czar of Muscovy was about to make a descent upon Lithuania, aided by the Wallachians and the Tartar hordes of the Taurida. The senators finally notified to his majesty that a diet had been convoked to meet at Stezicza, at which they prayed his presence to devise means to defend the realm and to provide for its various internal needs. If his majesty thought not well to comply with the request of his devoted petitioners, the members of the senate would hold that he abdicated the throne, and would immediately proceed to the election of another king. To this address Henry replied: "That the civil war in France prevented him from returning immediately into Poland; but that it was his royal intention to depute some of the

most distinguished personages of his realm to represent him before the diet, and to order things requisite for the defence and prosperity of Poland." The maréchal de Bellegarde, therefore, was despatched to represent the king at the diet, and to overtake Pibrac, who had already set out on his journey to reclaim the valuables left by Henry in Cracow. Pibrac, always persecuted by luckless destiny, had been surrounded on the borders of Burgundy by a troop of banditti and carried off to the mountains; where after a detention of some days, he was despoiled of his money and papers, and abandoned in the intricacies of a forest. There, famished and shoeless, Pibrac wandered for several days, until found by a detachment of archers sent to the rescue of the envoy by the authorities of the adjacent town of Montbelliard.[1] Pibrac and Bellegarde were directed to act in concert with Jacques de Faye, seigneur d'Espesses, one of the gentlemen of Henry's chamber, who, not having been intrusted with the secret of the king's evasion, had subsequently shown courage and fidelity in defending his majesty's interests. The Poles deeply resented the manner in which they had been abandoned by the king; and they, moreover, felt that the affairs of France must always detain Henry within his Gallic realm. Poland, consequently, was convulsed by factions. The archbishop of Gnesen, and the chamberlain Tenczin, who had so singularly sealed his vow of fealty to the king, still remained faithful to Henry's cause, and carried with them a large and influential portion of the senate. The supporters of the imperial faction rallied, and demanded the deposition of Henry and the election of the emperor Maximilian; while a third and powerful party proposed the election of a king of their own nation. Another party, supported by the influence of Anne

[1] Vie de Guy du Faur, Seigneur de Pibrac, par Charles Pascal.

Jagellon, espoused the part of the vaivode of Transylvania, Etienne Bathory, a gallant young prince, who had offered to espouse the princess. The diet of Stezicza assembled before the arrival of Henry's envoys.[1] After several tumultuous sessions, the deposition of Henry was resolved by a large majority of senators, as his majesty had not been pleased to appear in answer to the summons of his subjects. Pibrac was then only three days' journey from Stezicza; which fact being duly notified by M. d'Espesses, the diet suspended its decision to receive and hear the ambassadors of the king. Pibrac, as the most eloquent of the two envoys, undertook to lay the remonstrances and promises of king Henry before the senate. In his majesty's name he declared that France was ready to assist Poland with her blood, her treasures, and diplomatic resources; that Henry would send an army to defend his Polish realm against the Muscovite; and as for the Tartar hordes, the king proposed to take them into his own pay. He, moreover, commented on the good service already done to Poland by the power and prestige of France, which through her ambassadors at the Porte and at the court of Stockholm had warded off an invasion by both these powers.[2] The distance between the realms of France and Poland, however, and the situation of the latter—divided from Henry's hereditary states by the territory of the empire and that of the German Confederation or by the Italian states—rendered the difficulties almost insuperable for the personal access of the sovereign, or for the march of his armies to the aid of the Poles. The only feasible

[1] Henry's lieutenants during this reign partook of their royal master's indolent indifference. In this case Bellegarde had permitted himself a long delay in Savoy, fascinated by the charms of his uncle's widow Marie de Saluzzo, widow of the maréchal de Termes, whom he subsequently espoused by dispensation.

[2] De Thou. Cromar: Hist. de Pologne. Vie de Pibrac: Dupleix. Mathieu.

mode, therefore, by which France might have retained the realm of Poland, was by the immediate abdication of king Henry in favour of his brother or the king of Navarre. It is astonishing that a policy so obviously desirable was not eagerly adopted by Henry, who, by ridding his realm of either of these princes, would have neutralized the power of the other. The king, however, immersed in dreamy sensuality, and governed by his favourites—whose object it was to provide for the pleasures and security of the moment, and who cared little for an abstract point of policy which would bring present unpopularity and the probable enmity of Catherine de Medici—suffered the opportunity to pass. Catherine, on the other hand, had now convinced herself that the renunciation by Monsieur of his influence as a French prince, by accepting the distant crown of Poland, would curtail her power, which was strengthened by the dissensions between her sons and the rivalries of their partisans. As the husband of the queen of England, on the other hand, if such alliance could be contrived, the power of Monsieur to foster leagues and to arm the Huguenots of France would be greatly augmented; and Henry, therefore, still remaining in dread of his brother, would continue submissive, and appeal to the maternal shield of Catherine's counsels and intervention. The duc d'Alençon, moreover, was the heir-presumptive of the crown; and in case of the demise of Henry III., Catherine too vividly remembered the perils of her late regency, voluntarily to incur the same risks, increased as they would now be by the maturer age and the augmenting popularity of the king of Navarre. Moreover, the events in the Low Countries already occupied Catherine's astute speculations for Monsieur; for her majesty constantly maintained a secret correspondence in cypher with the prince of Orange and the Flemish malcontents.

In Poland, meantime, the panic prevailing relative to the menaced invasion by the Muscovites, accelerated the measures of the diet, and gradually extinguished the loyal fervour of Henry's most stanch supporters. If the king had promptly sent the duc d'Alençon, as his representative and generalissimo, provided with money, and empowered to subscribe to the religious guarantees demanded by the Poles, the crown would have remained on his head, and might with little risk have been eventually transferred to Monsieur. But, as circumstances were, the Poles indignantly resented the selfish *insouciance* of a monarch whose accession they had so enthusiastically hailed. Pibrac's message, therefore, was listened to with outward deference, the embargo laid on Henry's effects being at once removed. The diet was also convoked ostensibly to discuss Henry's propositions; but as Pibrac and Bellegarde received trusty intelligence that the decree passed during its former session, proclaiming the deposition of the king, was not likely to be annulled, they deemed their royal master's dignity better insured by their retirement from the realm. The connexion of Henry III. with Poland virtually terminates at this point. After several riotous sessions of the diet, the ceremonies of the election of a monarch were again re-enacted, the candidates being the emperor Maximilian and Stephen Battory vaivode of Transylvania. The votes of the palatinates proved nearly equally divided for each of the pretenders, and civil war broke forth, the archbishop of Gnesen espousing the imperial pretensions. Gourka palatine of Sandomeir, the comte de Tenczin, Sborowski palatine of Cracow, formerly Henry's adherents, having at first vainly striven to procure the elevation of a Polish noble to the throne, suddenly proclaimed the election of the princess Anne Jagellon, provided that she gave her hand to Battory. This

proposition Anne accepted; the vaivode, therefore, privately entered Cracow, and espoused the princess. Battory, thus proclaimed as king by a powerful party in the realm, in possession of the capital and the royal treasure, valiantly maintained his rights against his imperial competitor until the deccase of the emperor Maximilian in the course of the following year put an end to the contest, by the submission of Poland to Stephen and his consort Anne Jagellon.[1]

During the month of June king Henry fell ill of ear-ache; resulting, it was supposed, from exposure to the draughts of a church within which his majesty had knelt some time before a shrine. The sufferings of the king were excruciating, and during two days inflammation of the brain was apprehended. Incapable of the least self-control, the king's transports of rage and despair during his sufferings were indescribable. The most sombre suspicion took possession of his mind; and he believed himself poisoned by the machinations of the duc d'Alençon, who, his majesty declared, had bribed one of his valets to scratch him slightly with a poisoned pin on the nape of the neck, while fixing his ruff.[2] It was with the greatest difficulty that Catherine prevented the immediate arrest of Monsieur; and it is believed that the queen took upon herself to cancel the order issued by Henry to that effect. Shaken by the most terrible misgivings, Henry sent for the king of Navarre, and implored him to watch over his safety; and in case his death ensued, to seize the crown. "As," said the king, "I would rather that you reigned than that *malotru* of a traitor, my brother!" He then advised the king of Navarre to make his accession sure by compassing, while there was yet opportunity, the assassination of

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lxii.

[2] Mathieu, liv. vii. p. 418. Mezeray. The king was excessively subject to ear and tooth-aches.

Monsieur. "What!" exclaimed the king, "shall I leave my crown to this vile profligate? Mon frère, take my advice; find means to rid yourself of him and gather together your friends, so as to be ready at the first moment to seize my crown!"[1] When Henry uttered this injunction, it must charitably be supposed that, maddened by pain, he knew not what he counselled: nevertheless, when the week following his majesty's partial recovery we find him coolly discussing a plot for the assassination of his prisoner the maréchal de Montmorency, the perfidy of the mind which sanctioned the murder of Coligny and counselled that of Monsieur seems but to be developing its deformity. The king of Navarre treated Henry's proposition respecting Monsieur as emanating from the frenzy of delirium; but he thought it prudent, considering the reckless daring of some of the king's intimate associates, to advertise the queen of the peril which threatened her son. Catherine, therefore, sent for Monsieur, and ordered him to take up his abode in the hôtel des Tuileries, and carefully to avoid for the present his usual rambles through the streets of Paris.

During Henry's illness intelligence was brought by the baron d'Alais of the death of the marshal Damville, the duke having, it was said, been poisoned at Narbonne. The king, who believed that Damville's decease would terminate the troubles in Languedoc, received the news with satisfaction; and declared that it was the first and best alleviation he had experienced throughout his malady. The position of Montmorency had long been precarious; and, doubtless, Catherine during the preceding reign would have sacrificed him to her fears, had not Damville been free and at the head of an army of malcontents. The vengeance of so

[1] Mathieu, liv. vii. pp. 417–18. This statement is made by the historian on the authority of Henry IV.

potent a subject as Montmorency was greatly to be dreaded, when the wealth, the vassals, and the allies of the Montmorenci, if given to the rebels, probably would enable them to dictate terms to their sovereign. The king accordingly, on receiving the intelligence of the demise of Damville, summoned the queen his mother, the chancellor Birague, Cheverny, Matignon the captor of Montgomery, and Villequier to a private conference. There the matter was discussed at length, the queen proposing the death of the marshal. She, moreover, suggested that, as the traitor M. de Thoré would succeed his brothers as next in succession to the honours of Montmorency, the barony, dukedom, and wealth of the Montmorenci should be declared forfeited.[1] The king reluctantly consented to this proposal; his majesty, however, subsequently greatly approved of Catherine's design, and entered with alacrity into the details for its successful execution.

It was, however, far from the intention of the king and queen to bring the maréchal de Montmorency to trial for his alleged treasonable misdemeanours. The king had decided that the marshal should die; and midnight strangulation in the prison-cell was the sentence his majesty decreed. The health of Montmorency having been greatly impaired by his imprisonment, the king's physician Miron was sent to visit him; he being afterwards instructed to spread the report that he found the marshal suffering from determination of blood to the head, which on the slightest excitement might be expected to terminate fatally. The queen next commanded that the marshal should be subjected to a more rigorous form of imprisonment: his apartment was changed for a gloomy cell, and the officers of his

[1] Le Laboureur: Additions aux Mém. de Castelnau. Eloge du Maréchal de Damville: Mathieu, liv. vii. Journal de Henri III. Etoile. Brantôme: Vie du Maréchal de Montmorency.

household were interdicted from serving him as usual, or from even visiting their master. "Tell the queen," observed Montmorency, "that I foresee what her design is. She need not trouble herself, nevertheless; let her majesty send me an apothecary patronized by the chancellor (Birague), and I will swallow any dose he may present!"[1] The king, after much cogitation, fixed upon the marquis de Souvré to execute the design, promising him a notable spoil from amid the honours of the chieftain of Montmorency. The noble and upright heart of Souvré abhorred the task appointed him; chivalrous as well as brave, the marquis undauntedly pointed out to his master the enormity of the crime he contemplated. "Sire, consider what you ordain. Think you that this deed may be done so secretly that none may know? God will see and avenge! I would rather lose everything than see your majesty's reputation so sullied. Issue your royal commands, and bring the marshal to public trial. I cannot commit so great a perfidy."[2] The words and the resistance of Souvré made a great impression on the mind of the king; and for the subsequent few days he took no measures to enlist the services of a less scrupulous agent. At the expiration of this period authentic intelligence reached Paris that Damville had perfectly recovered his health, which at the worst had only been temporarily affected. Great, therefore, was the gratulation of Catherine that her project had not been executed. The imprisonment of Montmorency was instantly rendered more tolerable; his guards were changed and his servants restored. The queen communicated with madame de Montmorency at Chantilly, and excused the rigour of the recent measures

[1] Journal de Henri III. De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lxi.

[2] Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III., liv. vii. p. 418, et seq. Le Laboureur: Additions aux Mém. de Castelnau. Hist. de la Maison de Montmorency.

used towards her husband on the plea that information of some secret conspiracy had been submitted to the privy council, in which the marshal was accused of collusion—a charge which had been proved false. Montmorency, nevertheless, was not deceived by Catherine's plausible statements: he appreciated, and with good reason, the hardihood with which she conceived and executed the most unscrupulous measures; yet he bore her majesty no animosity which might alone be assuaged by the ruin of his country and the overthrow of the son of Henry II. In perusing the history of these troublous times the character of Montmorency stands forth in bright relief amid colleagues so corrupt and venal. Patriotic and of integrity most unimpeachable, the marshal yearned to heal the schisms which convulsed the state; and forgetful of his own wrongs and injuries, he sacrificed himself to accomplish that good work. When the queen subsequently deemed it politic to release Montmorency, and to throw herself in a manner on his magnanimous forgiveness of the wrongs she had inflicted, Catherine received a noble and practical lesson, showing her how a true subject and patriot avenged personal injury when the welfare of the state demanded its oblivion.

The king, as soon as he recovered his health, removed to the Louvre, the widowed queen having quitted France for the court of her father the emperor. Elizabeth, after the death of her husband, found herself without power or consideration. The cabals of the court were odious to her; while she had imbibed much of king Charles's aversion for his brother Henry. Under these circumstances Elizabeth gladly accepted her father's invitation to return to Vienna. With all her virtue and simplicity Elizabeth appears not to have possessed much tenderness of character; else herself feeling so keenly the disadvantages of a residence in Paris, she could not

have abandoned her infant daughter to the care of Catherine de Medici; nor even, as it can be discovered, made any attempt to convey her to be educated far from the levity of the court. Elizabeth appointed Pierre de Gondy, bishop of Paris, and Auger de Ghislin seigneur de Boësbecq, a German noble resident in France, to administer her pecuniary affairs and to watch over the welfare of the little princess Marie Isabel. She left them an emphatic charge to administer justice impartially throughout her dower lands; and to sell no public office or benefice, but to nominate thereto men good and learned, without respect to their birth or to the favour of the court.[1] Elizabeth's instructions were faithfully followed: her finances consequently flourished under the frugal administration of Boësbecq, who eventually was regarded as the sole representative of his royal mistress; for Gondy during the troubles of the League became too absorbed in political intrigues to occupy himself respecting Elizabeth's dower lands. The queen quitted Paris during the first week of August, 1575. She was received with the utmost pomp and respect in all towns through which she passed,[2] until she reached the German frontier, where Elizabeth was greeted by the ambassadors of the emperor her father.[3] The little princess her daughter seems to have been a precocious child; and is stated to have keenly felt and testified her resentment at the neglect with

[1] Hilarion de Coste: Eloges des Dames Illustres—Vie d'Elisabeth d'Autriche. Brantôme: Ibid. François Lerdonati: Eloge d'Elisabeth d'Autriche.

[2] Godefroy: Grand Cérém. de France, tome ii. Entrée de la Reyne Elisabeth d'Autriche dans la Ville d'Orléans.

[3] Elizabeth founded the nunnery of Santa Clara of Vienna, where she took up her residence. Elizabeth died in 1590. The following epitaph of her own composition was placed on her tomb in the chapel of the nunnery: "Peccantem me quotidie et non pœnitentem timor mortis conturbat, quia in inferno nulla est redemptio. Miserere mei, Deus, et salva me."

which she was treated. The child was suffered to remain in the Louvre; but her apartments were small and isolated. Catherine was too busy to visit her granddaughter, whose sickly health rendered her unattractive in person. The princess adored the memory of her father, and for hours would weep for his loss. She always testified the greatest fondness for those who had been his faithful servants, commanding that they should be admitted to her presence whenever they wished. Marie then held forth her little hand, and gravely promised "that, when she grew up and had means, she would remember them."[1] The king seemed to take the most interest in the welfare of "la petite Madame," as Charles's daughter was termed at court. One day Marie had been ill for three days, without receiving a visit from any of her royal relatives. On the third day Henry came alone to her apartment, and calling the little princess, offered to embrace her. Marie, however, stood still, and steadily fixed her eyes, which were filled with tears, upon her uncle. The king went to her, and taking the princess in his arms, he nursed and fondled her for some time; but Marie would not be propitiated, and refused to smile or return these caresses. When the king had taken his departure, the governess of the princess, madame de Brézy, asked reproachfully why she had so received her uncle. The princess replied, "How, madame, could I be expected to embrace and to show pleasure at the visit of my uncle, when I have, as you know, been ill three days, and his majesty never once visited me, nor did he send me any message or make inquiry?—I, who am his niece, the daughter of his elder brother, and such by nature that I hope I may do no dishonour to my lineage!"[2] This haughty little damsel, fortunately

[1] Brantôme: Dames Illustres—Vie de Madame Isabelle de France.
[2] Ibid.

for herself, died of gradual decline before she had completed her sixth year; or the misfortune which impended over her kindred might have taught her some hard yet salutary lessons of humility.

The disaffection of the duc d'Alençon during these transactions continued. He was jealous of the king of Navarre, who, despite his opposition and remonstrances, insisted upon visiting madame de Sauve. This lady in reality cared for neither of the princes; but being the friend of the queen-mother, she implicitly obeyed Catherine's directions, and intrigued to destroy the alliance between the king of Navarre and the duke.[1] Madame de Sauve, moreover, in order to separate the king and queen of Navarre, daily entertained Henri with accounts of Marguerite's *liaison* with Bussy d'Amboise, her brother's valiant gentleman. It is certain that the queen of Navarre lavished repeated marks of favour upon Bussy, who always accompanied Monsieur to his sister's apartment, with whom the duke, now in the height of his dissatisfaction, usually spent the greater part of the day. The marquis du Guast, whose old enmity towards Marguerite had received a keener edge from some recent attempts she had made to overthrow him in the king's favour, spread the most defamatory reports respecting her proceedings; and assigned the worst motives to the mysterious expeditions which Marguerite made in the company of the duchesse de Nevers to a house in an obscure street in Paris, whither the two often repaired to sup. The queen of Navarre treated these reports with proud disregard; while she avenged herself by ridiculing du Guast, and by arraying against

[1] "We had no other amusement than to let loose quails in our apartment, we therefore made love to the ladies, and we both became enamoured of the same beauty. Madame de Sauve always showed me favour, whilst she took pleasure in tormenting Monsieur in my presence, which enraged him greatly."—Sully, tome i. ch. 15.

him the cavaliers of Monsieur's band. Marguerite's blandishments, however, did not avert her husband's wrath. Henri indignantly heard the scandal and the comments made on the freedom of the life led by his consort. The ironical allusions of madame de Sauve completed his exasperation; and after one or two ineffectual remonstrances, met by Marguerite with taunts respecting his own *liaison* with the former, the alienation between the royal pair became complete as Catherine could desire. The king sent for his sister, and reprimanded her on the folly of her enthusiastic patronage of Bussy; and commented severely on her want of discretion in becoming the *confidente* of Monsieur, and on her levity for receiving private visits from the duc de Guise.[1] Marguerite was never at a loss for a rejoinder; and the witty point of her retorts, added to her absolute refusal to alter her conduct in any respect at the bidding, as she said, of the marquis du Guast, or to counsel Monsieur to submission, so incensed the king, that he forthwith proceeded to prefer a complaint to Catherine. The queen, however, refused to believe that her daughter was to blame; and whether she really thought such to be the fact, or was wearied with the eternal bickerings between her children, she declined to interfere. "Bussy sees my daughter before your majesty, and in the presence of the king her husband, before all the world, and before myself," angrily remarked Catherine. "Nothing to my knowledge has been done in secret or with closed doors. Bussy is a cavalier of high birth; why should we suspect evil?

[1] Dupleix makes a serious charge against Catherine at this period. He states that Marguerite confided to him, during the sojourn of seven years which he made in her household, "that queen Catherine tormented her to forget the king of Navarre her husband, and to love the duc de Guise as before; but that she flatly refused, adding, 'qu'elle n'avoit pas le cœur de cire.'"

Does your majesty know any facts other than this calumnious gossip? When at Lyons your majesty compelled me to offer a great affront to your sister upon a false representation. Be sure that the queen your sister still remembers that insult!"[1] Henry uttered some vague assurances that the general conduct of the queen of Navarre was sufficient to cause her husband's jealousy; "but on this matter of Bussy d'Amboise, madame, I confess I only speak from common report."

For the next few days Bussy audaciously continued his assiduities to the queen of Navarre, when several cavaliers of her husband's suite concerted together to waylay and poniard him as he quitted her apartment after attending Monsieur to his chamber. These cavaliers confided their project to du Guast, who readily promised to furnish them with soldiers from his regiment of guards, the better to compass Bussy's assassination. The soldiers were posted at midnight at the corners of the street, while twenty or thirty gentlemen awaited their victim with drawn swords. Bussy during the previous day had been engaged in a duel with the sieur de St. Phal, and having been wounded on the sword arm, could not defend himself. At the expected time he sallied from the palace; accompanied, however, by fifteen gentlemen of the household of Monsieur. His wounded arm was bound with an embroidered dove-coloured scarf—reported to be the gift of queen Marguerite—the sign by which his assailants were to distinguish him from his companions. Amid Bussy's escort was one of his own retainers, who, fortunately for his master, had likewise injured his arm, and which, in imitation, he had encircled with a scarf of similar colour.

When Bussy reached the place of ambuscade, the Béarnnois cavaliers rushed upon him, and a bloody

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite.

conflict ensued. Aided by his brave colleagues, Bussy managed to fight his way to his lodgings, which were at hand, the more readily as his retainer with the scarf being killed at the commencement of the fray, the assailants believing that their vengeance had been completed, gradually dispersed.[1] The report of the assault meanwhile was carried to Monsieur by an Italian valet who entered the Louvre shouting that "Bussy was being assassinated!" The duke rose, and seizing his sword, prepared to rush to the scene of conflict, vowing to avenge his favourite's death. The noise, however, had alarmed queen Marguerite, whose apartments opened on the same gallery. Hastily throwing on a *robe-de-chambre*, Marguerite ran to her brother's apartment, and meeting him at the door as he was going out, she fell at his feet, and prayed him not to leave the palace. Monsieur, who was weeping and menacing, refused to listen to his sister. Marguerite, therefore, who apprehended disastrous consequences from Monsieur's descent into the streets at that hour without attendants, sent one of her waiting-women to fetch the queen-mother. Catherine, whose quick ears had already detected the sounds of unusual tumult, was, however, on her way to her son's apartment. She sharply roused the duke from his transport of grief by commanding him to lay aside his sword. Her majesty next despatched an order forbidding the sentinels on guard to allow the duc d'Alençon to pass out. She then sat down and commenced to discuss quietly the bearings of the event.

The following morning Henry prohibited the renewal of the fray, under penalty of arrest. The anger of the duc d'Alençon, however, was roused beyond con-

[1] Marguerite in her Memoirs expresses herself with the greatest fervour respecting Bussy d'Amboise, "Il était," writes she, "la terreur de ses ennemis, la gloire de son maître, et l'espérance de ses amis." Bussy at this period was also greatly favoured by madame de Sauve.

trol. "My brother," says queen Marguerite, "was filled with mortification and anger and vengeance, and very plainly indicated his resentment at the offence committed against him by this project of depriving him of the most brave and the most worthy of servants that prince could have." At the urgent desire of Catherine, Monsieur very reluctantly consented that Bussy should retire for a few weeks from court; as serious broils were apprehended when the latter should have recovered the use of his arm. Monsieur, therefore, being more and more resolved to leave the court, despatched his favourite to await him in Dreux, confiding to him his intention to withdraw. A few days subsequently, the marquis du Guast, whose favour was now at its height, secretly recommended king Henry to deprive his sister of the services of mademoiselle de Torigny,[1] who was much beloved by the queen of Navarre, on the plea that many of Marguerite's most imprudent enterprises were planned by that lady, whose levity of conduct he alleged was notorious, and that she enabled her royal mistress to make assignations with the cavaliers of the court. Henry immediately acted upon this advice, the more readily as Monsieur seemed also to confide in mademoiselle de Torigny; and he deemed it greatly to his interests to disperse the hostile coterie whose daily rendezvous was holden in Marguerite's apartments. The king, therefore, sent for his brother-in-law, and advised him to insist on the dismissal of Torigny, stating, with apparent candour, his reasons for the counsel he offered.[2] The king of Navarre willingly assented to any measure likely to lessen the scandal of these daily intrigues and misunderstandings. Made-

[1] Gillette Goyon, daughter of the maréchal de Matignon and of Françoise de Daillon.

[2] The king said, "qu'il ne falloit pas laisser à de grandes et jeunes princesses des filles en qui elles eussent tant de confiance;" his majesty quoting his own example in respect to madame de Changy.

moiselle de Torigny accordingly received an order to retire from court, a few hours being alone given her for preparation. This decision, alike resented by Marguerite and her brother, rendered them still more vindictively inclined against the king; who in reality possessed an unenviable faculty for persecuting those whom he disliked in a small way. As for the marquis du Guast, Marguerite and her brother had no present means of avenging themselves on the powerful favourite; though before many weeks elapsed he experienced the cost of outraging a woman of Marguerite's temperament. The loathing with which the queen mentions this favourite evinces the intensity of her resentment. "Le Guast," as Marguerite terms him, "governed everybody; every one was obliged to beg and pray him to obtain that which he wished from the king. If any person presumed to ask for himself, he was denied with contempt. If any one served the princes, he was forthwith a ruined man, and exposed to a thousand quarrels and annoyances." The marquis du Guast, despite of Marguerite's censure, was not altogether the tyrant she would represent; and, of the throng of worthless parasites who surrounded the throne of Henry III., he appears to have been one the least reprehensible. Du Guast perpetually counselled his royal master to discard his slothful habits; he abhorred and protested against the profligacy exhibited at the royal revels. Neither did he impoverish his royal master by shameful exactions. His faults were an excess of arrogance—and an implacable pursuit of those persons, including the queen of Navarre, whom he hated.

The intelligence which reached the duc d'Alençon of the successful negotiation of Condé in Germany and in the Swiss cantons for the levy of troops, was received by Monsieur with transport, as facilitating his flight from Paris. Condé had made a levy of eight thousand German reiters and six thousand Swiss troops; for the

enrolment of which Thoré had contributed 50,000 crowns. The German bands were led by Casimir, son of the elector-palatine, with whom it had been covenanted by the chieftains, Huguenot as well as Malcontent, that no peace should be signed until king Henry had nominated the prince governor of the three imperial cities of Toul, Metz, and Verdun. In Languedoc, Damville was making progress; the people of La Rochelle clamoured for war; while Provence was torn by divisions between the king's own officers. The parliaments of the realm seemed paralyzed by the utter ruin which everywhere seemed to impend. Instead of effectually aiding the government, the members wasted moments so precious in aimless discussions; in cavillings to curtail the privileges granted to the Calvinists by the edicts; and in framing laws the better to shield themselves from the increased taxation necessitated by the war which they clamorously demanded. The clergy, in sullen distrust, imitating the example of Guise their champion, held aloof, doubtful of the intentions of the court. Aware that reforms of magnitude were at hand, and that the disorganization of the court and administration was complete, they waited the result. From their own ranks many had apostatized; and one eminent prelate,[1] throwing aside the archiepiscopal ensigns, wielded the sword in Damville's camp. The finances also were necessarily in the greatest disorder; and Henry was compelled to adopt various illegal methods for raising money to compensate for the serious deficiency which the revolt of such a province as Languedoc occasioned in the exchequer. To complete the perils and miseries of France, a devastating warfare raged on the frontier; conducted on one side with the vigour and resources of the most powerful European monarchy; on the other, with the unflinching constancy and courage of men

[1] St. Romain, archbishop of Aix, who, after embracing the tenets of Calvinism, resorted to the sword as his future profession.

fighting for their country, their lives, their children, and their faith, to whom defeat would bring misfortune worse than death. The queen of England and the various Protestant states of Europe had contributed to support these "rebels of Flanders" in their heroic defiance of Philip II., and their rejection of the chambers of inquisition. Gradually, however, the fact had transpired that Catherine de Medici held secret relations with the Flemish malcontents. Despite her professions of orthodoxy; her recent demonstrations against the Huguenots of France; her assurances to the Romish See; and her policy—which appeared to aim at the overthrow of every creed antagonistic to that which she herself had openly espoused, the queen maintained a close correspondence with the princes of Nassau; and it was this knowledge which agitated the clergy of France. Moreover, this fact infused vigour into the Protestant counsels, and occasioned a still closer union, political and religious, between the adherents of Rome; while it so alarmed and incensed Philip II., as to cause his adoption of a policy disastrous in its results as regarded France.

The time was recent when Catherine's faith had yielded to her policy; and the prelates of the realm yet remembered with indignation the period when the queen-mother had bestowed an apparent sanction on the heretical effusions of de Bèze and the bishop of Valence.

In France, after the accession of Henry III., 20,000 men, led by renowned chieftains, and supported by foreign alliances, would have flocked to the standard of the queen, had she chosen again to make overtures to the Protestant party. From one end of France to the other, therefore, jealousies were rife; seditions, distrust, frauds, famine, and poverty reigned everywhere. The court, meanwhile, set the example of discord; and

showed that the highest personages of the realm were not exempt from participation in the general corruption. The character of the king proved the reverse of a spectacle encouraging or edifying to his distracted people. Next to his majesty stood Monsieur, weak, perfidious, and crafty; then Marguerite, with her imperial beauty and unbridled passions, uniting the frivolity of the most wanton coquette with the fierce and vengeful spirit of her race.* On the right hand of the throne towered Catherine, terrible in her uncertainty—the incarnation of that policy which had exalted her ancestors of Medici from the marts of commerce to be lords of Florence; displaying a singular oblivion of past pledges; having no fixed principles of government, yet unerringly imparting the aspect and effects which she desired to events as they passed—the character of the queen presenting the grand enigma of the age. In strong contrast with the queen-mother appeared her daughter-in-law Louise: gentle, pious, and dazzled by the splendours of her state, yet inspired with that pride of race inherent in the blood of Lorraine, Louise neither possessed nor desired political influence. The king of Navarre—of genial and buoyant spirit, and of honour so unstained, that by two kings successively he had been chosen as the guardian of their life against the machinations of their nearest kindred—as yet challenged the confidence of no especial faction. In the court of Henry the king of Navarre played a secondary part as the satellite of Monsieur, his just pretensions being crushed by the assumptions of the king's favourites. Later, the nation recognised in Henri de Navarre the worthy son of Jeanne d'Albret, and the hero whose first essay in arms had been made beneath the inspiration of Coligny's genius. Condé, of reserved temper, unshaken integrity, taciturn, and rigid in morals, was little fitted for the leader of a faction. Oppressed by a continual sense of

the injury he had personally sustained from the hands of Henry III., first on the plains of Jarnac, in the murder of his father; secondly, by the king's intended appropriation of his deceased wife Marie de Clèves, the prince abhorred the court for its profligacy; whilst he bore it unrelenting animosity for the perfidious slaughter of St. Bartholomew's Eve.

Such were the chief personages to whom France looked for extrication from the calamities, religious, political, and financial, about to overwhelm the realm; when her nobles, once so loyal and chivalrous, deserted the standard of their king; and her prelates, deluded by the phantom of future arbitrary dominion, sold themselves to obey the mandates of the Spanish and Papal courts.

CHAPTER III.

1575—1576.

Attempted reconciliation between the king and the duc d'Alençon—Henry's rural pursuits—Insolent deportment of M. du Guast towards Monsieur—Exasperation of the duke—His arrest and flight from Paris—Demeanour of the queen of Navarre—Measures adopted—Progress of the duke—His manifestoes—Mission of Villeroy—Queen Catherine repairs to Châtelleraud to negotiate with the confederates—Interview of Chambord—Illness of the queen—Victory of Château-Thierry—Retreat of Monsieur from Blois—Diversions of the king—Henry founds an academy of *belles-lettres*—The marquis du Guast—His assassination—Release of the maréchal de Montmorency—Progress of the queen's negotiation for peace—Conferences of Champigny—Truce accepted for six months—The king levies troops—His financial expedients—Interview with the authorities of Paris—Return of queen Catherine—Partial performance of the truce—Entry into France of Condé with an army of German troops—Dismay of the duc d'Alençon—Evasion of the king of Navarre from court—Its detail—Declaration published by the king of Navarre—Arrest of queen Marguerite—Royal vengeance on mademoiselle de Torigny—The duc d'Alençon adheres to the cause of the allies—The duc and duchesse de Montpensier—Release of the queen of Navarre—Its motives—Departure of queen Catherine for the camp of the confederates.

The sombre and resentful expression of Monsieur's countenance revealed his secret discontent, and prepared the Parisians for the events which followed. Henry's private counsellors Cheverny and Villequier, advised him to make conciliatory overtures to the duke, and also to the queen of Navarre, whose coldness of demeanour was steadily manifested. Among other recreations which the king had adopted was the extraordinary one of setting out in his coach with queen

Louise attended only by a single valet, and driving into the country to such distances that often his majesty returned to the Louvre at midnight, or even later, to find the palace in commotion, and a train of guards and torch-bearers about to depart in search of the royal pair. On several occasions ludicrous accidents happened to their majesties. Once the wheel of the coach came off; and as there were neither attendants to go in search of assistance or to help to raise the vehicle, which capsized in the mud, the king and queen were compelled to alight and walk the distance of a league; and arrived about midnight at the Louvre, wearied and in the most rueful condition possible. Another day their majesties were nearly drowned by the breaking of a small bridge across the Seine, over which their carriage was passing. As a mark, therefore, of the greatest possible favour, king Henry on several occasions requested his brother to accompany his consort and himself on these expeditions: a privilege which Monsieur would have been only too glad to decline. The witty merriment of Marguerite, and her friend the duchesse de Nevers, was more than once inspired by these the rural recreations of the royal pair, which invariably were attended by some disastrous adventure derogatory to their dignity.

The duc d'Alençon, nevertheless, continued assiduously to make preparation for his flight, and found an able confederate in Marguerite. Soon after the attack upon Bussy, the duke chanced to meet the marquis du Guast in the rue St. Antoine, who insolently passed him without recognition or mark of respect whatever. Monsieur returned to the palace in a state of great excitement; and, repairing to Marguerite's apartments, recounted the insult he had received. It chanced that madame de Sauve was present, and noting some of the expressions used by the duke in the heat of his passion,

she immediately reported them to Catherine. The queen mentioned Monsieur's anger to her son the king; whereupon du Guast and Villequier, vowing that the duke had prepared that very night for flight, advised Henry to arrest him. The king was easily persuaded; and guards were accordingly posted at the door of the duke's apartment. As soon as this rash decision was made known to Catherine by Cheverny, she went to the king, and upbraiding him for his precipitation, insisted that Monsieur's arrest should be annulled. This arrest, though it lasted only a few hours, kindled still deeper resentment in the mind of the duke. Two days afterwards, the duke, after taking a tender farewell of Marguerite, proceeded on foot about half-past seven o'clock in the evening attended by one gentleman to the Porte St. Honoré. Monsieur wore a cloak and a kind of mask for the face, commonly used in those days, and called a *tour-de-nez*, so that his figure and features were completely concealed. At the barrier the duke found his chamberlain Simier awaiting him, and the coach of the duchesse de Nevers; who, espousing Monsieur's interests, readily lent it to facilitate his evasion. The duke stepped into the coach, and proceeded to the distance of a quarter of a league from Paris, when he alighted, and entered a house by the wayside. Simier desired that the coach might wait Monsieur's return, and hinted that the duke was bound on a love assignation. He then leisurely followed his royal master and closed the door. In the fields at the back of this house, however, four cavaliers waited for Monsieur, mounted and equipped. The duke hastily threw himself upon a horse, and followed by Simier, Clermont d'Amboise, Lafin, and one other gentleman, he took the road towards Dreux. About halfway between Dreux and Paris the duke was met by Bussy d'Amboise at the head of a gallant cavalcade of three hundred nobles and gentle-

men of the Malcontent party, who hailed Monsieur's presence with transport, and escorted him to the abode prepared.[1] The project of the duke's evasion was managed with such adroitness, that not a single panic or *contretemps* happened. There were no distracting preparations for flight; and the duke left all his effects behind, taking with him only the blood-stained doublet worn by la Mole on the day of his execution,[2] which Monsieur had vowed to wear the first time he encountered the army of the king in the battle-field. It appears that Monsieur had not confided his project to the king of Navarre, being jealous of the favour shown towards the latter by the king, and resenting his treatment of Marguerite, and Henri's assiduities to madame de Sauve. He, however, met the king of Navarre one day a short time previous to his departure from Paris, when the two princes exchanged general assurances of friendly alliance; and bound themselves mutually to support any step either might independently adopt to promote the objects of their party.[3]

The queen of Navarre, on the evening of the flight of the duc d'Alençon, presented herself as usual at the king's supper, of which Catherine partook. Marguerite, whose powers of dissimulation were unsurpassed, appeared totally unconcerned, and laughed and jested as usual with the cavaliers of the court, "who flocked like bees around this most lovely and fragrant flower of Valois." Varied were the comments made on the absence of Monsieur. Presently the great clock of the Louvre tolled forth nine—the hour when the king usually rose from table, and passed either to the ball-

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. Davila, tome ii. liv. vi. p. 26 et seq. La Popelinière, liv. xl. De Thou, liv. lxi. Notice sur le Duc d'Alençon: Fontanieu, 337, 338 (1575) Bibl. Imp. MS.

[2] Mezeray: Vie de Henri III.

[3] Mathieu, liv. vii. Histoire de la Ville de Dreux.

room or to the saloon of queen Catherine, where the latter and her daughter-in-law the queen-consort received three times in the week. After some brief conference between the queen-mother and her son, Catherine called Marguerite and pointedly demanded "where Monsieur was, and why he had not supped as usual with his majesty?" Marguerite demurely replied, "Madame, I have not seen M. le duc since he dined."[1] Catherine then despatched a chamberlain to the apartments of the duke with orders to require his presence before the king; and empowering her messenger, if necessary, to search throughout the Louvre and in the saloons of those ladies whose society he frequented. During this time the king and his mother lingered at the banqueting table waiting the result; for a suspicion of the truth had dawned upon the minds of all present. Those personages favourable to the designs of Monsieur gathered round the queen of Navarre, hoping to glean somewhat from the animated discourse which Marguerite was holding with the duc de Guise. At length the chamberlain, sent with the royal summons to Monsieur, returned with the intelligence that his royal highness was not in the Louvre, nor even, it was believed, in Paris, he having been observed some hours previously quitting the capital by the rue St. Honoré. The fury of king Henry then broke forth. He upbraided his mother and Cheverny for having contravened the counsels of du Guast, who had advised Monsieur's arrest: he sternly questioned the king of Navarre; but fortunately the latter was able unequivocally to deny any knowledge of the duke's design. Henry then commanded the cavaliers present to take horse, and to bring back the fugitive, exclaiming "that Monsieur was gone to make war upon the realm, but that he would soon bring him to a sense of his folly in presuming to

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite.

take up arms against a monarch so puissant!" No one, however, stirred; but all eyes were rivetted attentively on the countenance of Catherine. The queen, who never lost her self-possession, took his majesty's arm, and led the way towards the royal cabinet, having first coldly dismissed the queen of Navarre. Messages were then sent by the king desiring the presence of Cheverny, of Villequier, of du Guast, of the duc de Nevers, and of the duc de Montpensier generalissimo of the forces, who chanced to be in the capital. Orders were also sent in the queen's name to certain cavaliers friendly to the duke to ride in pursuit of Monsieur, and, if possible, to bring him back, under the promise that every satisfaction should be given him. It was subsequently determined that the duc de Nevers should without delay take the command of the household troops and the soldiers in garrison at Paris, and march to intercept the probable flight of the duke beyond the Loire. The duc de Montpensier was commanded by their majesties to return to his camp, and, at the head of the army of Poitou, to join this division under Nevers, and pursue and arrest the duc d'Alençon. The duke, however, to the indignation and astonishment of the king, declined to accept the command of any army sent especially to act against the heir-presumptive of France. An order was also given to the duc de Guise to retire to his government of Champagne, and oppose the advance of the German levies under duke Casimir and Condé, which were on their road. To the maréchal de Biron was committed the safety of St. Dénis; the duc d'Aumale and other princes of the house of Lorraine having outposts intrusted to them for the defence of the capital.[1]

Monsieur, meantime, after making a sojourn of eight

[1] De Thou, liv. lxi.

days in Dreux,[1] pushed onwards, and passing the Loire, entered Poitou. The duc de Nevers, strictly following the instructions given to him by his royal master, pursued the duke with such impetuosity, that he nearly came up to him; and would undoubtedly have effected his capture, had not he received an express from Catherine, as he was preparing to offer combat, commanding him not to attack the prince, as she hoped to negotiate peace without having recourse to arms.[2] Monsieur, meanwhile, was joined by la Noue, Ventadour, Turenne, and by other Huguenot chieftains of note, who brought him a force consisting of nearly eighteen hundred men. Bussy d'Amboise had resumed his influence over the mind of his royal master, which, together with the exhortations of la Noue and Turenne, infused something approaching to consistent design in the duke's measures. By their advice Monsieur issued a manifesto, wherein he declared that he had quitted the court actuated by no hostile designs against the king; but that his sole motive was to confer freely with the party in arms in order to restore peace throughout the realm; that he was resolved to obtain a reformation of the government, to secure to all their rights and liberties, Roman Catholic as well as Huguenot. He deemed it, moreover, his duty to protest against the inroads made

[1] From Dreux the duke wrote a hypocritical letter to his mother, in which he feigns to regret that he cannot wait to speak to her in that place, which Catherine had proposed, hoping thus to arrest her son's march. "Madame," says the duke, "je ne sais ni ce que j'écris, ni là où je suis, tant je suis troublé du regret que j'ay qui me point jusques en l'âme, voyant que l'espérance que j'avois pour créance certaine est vaine, puisque vous n'avez eu agréable de venir aujourd'hui; étant de tout impossible que je puisse retarder plus longuement en cette ville, que je suis forcé de partir demain avec mes troupes," &c.—Lettre du Duc d'Alençon à la Reine Catherine sa mère: Dreux, 23 Septembre, 1575. Fontanieu, 337-8, MS. Bibl. Imp.

[2] Mém. du Duc de Nevers, tome i.

on the public treasure by unworthy favourites; finally, to obtain these indispensable concessions on a solid basis, he demanded the convocation of the States-general, and prayed the king to believe that these demands proceeded not from personal ambition or resentment, but from a heart which throbbed with patriotism and fervour for the glory of God and his king.[1] Monsieur, moreover, wrote letters to the queen of England praying her majesty to judge his actions equitably, and to retain for him her gracious favour. He also despatched letters to the pope explaining his views and projects, and protesting his desire to live and die a humble son of the one true church. In reply to missives privately sent to him by the queen-mother, the duke consented to confer with her majesty, provided that she trusted herself to his honour and affection and came without escort; but adding that no articles of peace could be seriously discussed until the maréchals de Cossé and de Montmorency were released.

The evasion of Monsieur occasioned the most varied surmises and predictions. It was, nevertheless, popularly believed that the queen-mother herself had connived at the departure of the prince. In her hatred of the Huguenot faction, it was said that the queen, dismayed at the progress made by Condé, Thoré, and Meru in their negotiations with the German princes, determined to rend the unity of their counsels by dividing their chieftains. Condé, as first in dignity, had hitherto been regarded as the leader of the hostile movement; but the queen foresaw, it was reported, that her son d'Alençon, in virtue of his royal rank, must supersede Condé in his command, in case he went over

[1] Manifesto de M. Frère du Roi, publié à Dreux, Septembre 17, 1575. De Thou. Lettre du Roi à M. de Humières, Gouverneur de Picardie: MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. 8820, fol. 28—datée Paris, le 16ème jour de Septembre, 1575.

to the cause. Catherine well knew Monsieur's poverty of resource, and appreciated his excess of self-esteem. She was aware that private interests and resentments had alone moved the duke to revolt;[1] and his desires conceded, she trusted to reclaim him at pleasure, after his jealousies, vacillations, and misconduct had ruined the cause of the confederates. It must be acknowledged that the subsequent conduct of Catherine tends to confirm this view of her proceedings, though her language offered the sternest protest against such suspicion. The counter-orders which she had sent secretly to the duc de Nevers, meanwhile becoming known to the king, produced the first coldness between Henry and his mother. The marquis du Guast, moreover, presumed to use language highly offensive to the queen, and commented severely on her dubious policy. Catherine, nevertheless, induced the king to send the maréchal de Cossé—whose health had compelled his majesty shortly before Monsieur's evasion to grant him leave to exchange his cell in the Bastille for a prison in his own hôtel—and Villeroi, secretary of state to the duc d'Alençon, on a mission of expostulation; while the queen herself made preparation to depart to adjust the duke's grievances, and bring him back in triumph to the court. The duc d'Alençon refused to make response whatever to the mission of the royal envoys: he listened to Villeroi, which Monsieur flippantly said was in itself a great concession, considering the prosy mannerism of the secretary.[2] Catherine shortly afterwards quitted Paris, greatly offended at the conduct of the king, and journeyed to Châtelleraud; and from thence

[1] Monsieur clamorously demanded, amongst other matters, an augmentation of appanage with the title of duc d'Anjou—a concession which the king had steadily refused.

[2] "Fervaques luy faisoit (à Villeroi) les oreilles d'âne par derrière."—Mathieu, liv. vii. p. 425, &c.

to Blois. The duc d'Alençon had a first and private interview with the queen at Chambord, where he again demanded the release of Montmorency as the preliminary of any concession.

No sooner had his mother quitted the capital than Henry became overwhelmed with compunction for his suspicions of her faithful attachment. He therefore despatched Cheverny to explain and to assure her majesty "of his respect, obedience, and perfect love." Cheverny, moreover, placed in the queen's hands powers from her son to negotiate, according to her knowledge, of what was requisite for the realm. Henry's ambassador found Catherine at Châtelleraud suffering from cold and fever, the result of her hurried journey and her chagrin at the conduct of the king. At the same time news arrived of the defeat at Château-Thierry of a detachment of 2000 German troops and a body of 500 French cavalry under Thoré by the duc de Guise. These troops were a first instalment of the levies made by Condé. Thoré, whose wealth had so greatly accelerated the success of Condé's mission, no sooner heard of Monsieur's evasion than he demanded permission to lead this detachment to the duke's succour. He therefore crossed the frontiers of Lorraine, and entered Champagne near to the town of Langres. On learning the advance of Thoré, Catherine sent him word, before leaving Paris, "that, if he did not disband his army, she would send him the head of his brother the maréchal de Montmorency." Thoré replied, "that no threats would induce him to act so cowardly and unworthy a part; but that, if the queen performed her menace, there would be nothing which he and his should not conspire to overthrow."[1] The victory of the duc de Guise over Thoré and his 2000 Germans

[1] Ligues: Vie de Duplessis-Mornay, p. 31 et suivantes. Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III. p. 423.

was not surprising, inasmuch as he opposed an overwhelming force of upwards of 12,000 men led by Strozzi and the duc de Mayenne against their advance. The rout was of course complete. The duc de Guise received in this engagement a severe wound on the cheek from the discharge of an arquebuse, which left so ghastly a scar as ever after to earn for him the *soubriquet* of "le Balafré." Thoré escaped with a few of his principal officers, and safely joined the duc d'Alençon at Vendôme.[1] Catherine, meantime, sent missive upon missive inviting her son to a conference at Blois before the ruin of the kingdom was consummated. Monsieur accordingly, attended by Bussy, Thoré, and Simiers, repaired to Blois; but receiving a hint before the interview with the queen, that Catherine, emboldened by the victory of Château-Thierry, intended to arrest him in case he proved obdurate to her representations, the duke precipitately retired at midnight and retreated to Romorentin.[2]

In Paris Henry solaced his cares by the most frivolous diversions. The Parisians looked on in amaze at the inaction of the hero whom in former days they had so greatly lauded. The people beheld "les vaincus de Jarnac et de Moncontour" rising in every province, and yet the prince who had once been hailed as their triumphant conqueror indolently wasted the day in ignoble occupations. Henry, it was true, was gracious and fluent as ever in his speech; the majesty of his presence had suffered no eclipse; and the ceremonial of his court surpassed that of any of his predecessors in elaborate magnificence. The greater part of the day Henry spent in debate with his "mignons" on matters of costume and etiquette, or in adjusting their disputes. He then, if the weather was propitious, took recreation on the

[1] Mém. de Bouillon: de Thou, liv. lxi.
[2] L'Etoile: Journal de Henri III.

river, reclining in his painted gondola. A drive with the queen his consort followed; during which their majesties visited the convents of the capital, carrying away with them specimens of fine needlework, confectionery, and little dogs, for Henry's strange passion for these animals commenced about this period. The gentle manners and beauty of Louise rendered her very popular with the nuns; and the liberal donations of the king, and his gracious manners, made him also a welcome visitant. Henry, moreover, took pleasure in discussing and reforming the rules of many of the religious houses. On the return of the king he entered his cabinet to transact, as he called it, public business—in fact, to affix his signature to the documents prepared by his secretaries and favourites. The evening Henry spent surrounded by the ladies of the court; that brilliant band adorned by the beauty of Marguerite de Valois, the wit of the duchesse de Retz, and the sprightly grace and magnificence of the duchesse de Nevers. Balls, theatrical representations, and ballets, in which the most lovely women of the court danced before the king, were of nightly recurrence. Sometimes the three pastimes were enjoyed during the same evening. The king often entertained the principal ladies of the court at splendid banquets, when the revelry that ensued was exuberant if not refined. The most splendid of these entertainments during the summer of 1575 was the banquet given by Henry in honour of the nuptials of the duc de Mercœur, brother of queen Louise, with Marie daughter and heiress of the duc de Penthièvre. The presents of jewels given by his majesty to the bride were of the most costly description. The king imparted greater zest to these revels by occasionally leading his court, barefooted and clad in sackcloth, through the streets of Paris on a pilgrimage to some shrine. During the absence of Catherine a penitential excursion on a

large scale was undertaken by the king on the Feast of St. Dénis, to pray for the success of her mediation. All the relics from the Sainte Chapelle were paraded through the streets, followed by Henry barefooted and telling his beads with devotion. None of the ladies of the court were suffered on this occasion to join in the procession, the object to be attained being of pre-eminent moment, as, observed the king, "where ladies are to be found there is little devotion."

Henry, who really loved learning, and who contemplated with pride his own gifts of rhetoric, also at this period commenced the formation of an academy for the study of *belles-lettres*, of which he constituted himself president. Amongst its members were Pibrac, Ronsard, Doron, Pasquier, du Guast, Espinac, and other learned or accomplished men of the age. The members held periodical meetings, at which a subject named in turn by each was discussed without previous preparation. The king duly addressed his academical colleagues when it fell to his turn, and acquitted himself so eloquently as to gain much real applause. The king in his enthusiasm thinking to improve the elegance of his oratorical displays, next resolved upon going through a course of grammar, under the direction of the learned Jean Doron; and also to study the Latin language, for greater facility of quotation from classical authors—a style which was then much in fashion.[1] Nothing could have been more meritorious than that the king, feeling his deficiencies on these points, should seek to remedy them; but the publicity which he gave to his studies, and his childish elation at his progress, degraded the majesty of the crown. The Parisians became exasperated beyond control when province after province raised the banner of revolt, and clamorous demands were made to recruit the finances by the agents of the government, to know

[1] Lettres de Pasquier, tome ii. p. 483.

that their king was sitting *tête-à-tête* with Doron gravely conjugating a verb! The fatuity of the prince was so great at this period, that Miron his first physician, a man of strong intellect and frank of speech, experienced a temporary disgrace by hinting that the king was probably suffering from some derangement of the brain, which might cause his death within the space of a year.

Epigrams innumerable were penned by Henry's subjects on the return of their royal master to the dominion of the pedagogue and the ferula. The most stinging of these satires was the one composed anonymously, however, by Pasquier, his majesty's erudite attorney-general. The young queen seems to have been quite unable to prevail upon her consort to adopt a demeanour more suitable to his dignity. Louise, at this early period, stood greatly in awe of her husband, and dreaded the flippant raillery of his favourites. The queen had neither the energy nor the experience requisite to command in the circle of the court. She felt uneasy and often abashed in the presence of her mistress of the robes the duchesse de Nevers; and many a regretful memory did the young queen lavish on the solitary chamber of her father's palace of Blamont, endeared as it was to her by the recollection of her friend and instructress madame de Changy, whose society had been so arbitrarily denied her, as Louise afterwards discovered, by the counsel of du Guast.

Another severe disappointment further chagrined Henry's lieges of Paris, that the queen appeared not at present likely to bear offspring. To obtain this boon the king and queen, during the month of November, 1576, established oratories in all the churches of Paris, which they visited in succession, bestowing bountiful alms.

Beneath the frivolity and dissipation of the court

there lurked, however, relentless enmities. The marquis du Guast continued to render himself obnoxious by his arrogance and by his satirical allusions to the intrigues of the ladies of the court. Marguerite determined, therefore, during the absence of the queen-mother, to be avenged on the marquis, whom she considered as her chief and most virulent enemy. In after-life queen Marguerite often bitterly alluded to the irreparable injury she had suffered by the malignity of du Guast's fabrications at Angers, which she averred had destroyed both her repute and her happiness. Du Guast, moreover, had irrevocably offended the duc de Guise and his kindred; and the *hauteur* with which the great duke treated the *parvenu* favourite had been long most galling to the feelings of the king. The marquis having, therefore, incurred the enmity of all the most powerful personages of the realm, including queen Catherine, Marguerite deemed that her vengeance might now safely be executed. Its unscrupulous violence causes a shudder, especially when the deed is contemplated as emanating from the most lovely and admired woman of the court of France; and great indeed must have been the demoralization of all ranks at this period when so perfidious an act was applauded, and even justified.

Duprat marquis de Nantouillet had a nephew, whose lawless life had caused him to fly from Paris to save himself from summary chastisement. During the reign of Charles IX. this ruffian, who bore the title of baron de Viteaux, had committed an atrocious assassination on the person of Allègre sieur de Millaud, and was consequently obliged to live in various parts of the country to avoid arrest, as king Charles refused to grant letters of pardon and caused a most energetic search to be instituted for the apprehension of the criminal. This Millaud was a partisan of the duc d'Anjou, and had arrived in Paris to accompany Henry to Poland, having

been nominated to the office which Pibrac afterwards obtained. Henry, therefore, on his accession again refused to grant letters of abolition to Viteaux; a resolve sustained by the influence of the marquis du Guast, whose friend the murdered man had been. About this period, however, the baron de Viteaux again ventured to return to Paris in order to present a petition to the throne, while he himself found sanctuary in the monastery of the Augustinians. This step Viteaux had taken by the advice of Nantouillet; who, having been asked to furnish a loan to the government, trusted to be able to compound for his nephew's crime. Marguerite, therefore, fixed upon this desperate man as the agent of her vengeance upon du Guast. Accordingly the queen repaired in disguise to the monastery of the Augustinians, and held conference with Viteaux. She explained her projects, commenting on the detestation in which the marquis was holden by queen Catherine, the duc d'Alençon, the duc de Guise, and queen Louise, all which personages he had mortally offended. She next inflamed the resentment of Viteaux by assurances that the king would long ago have pardoned the murder of Allègre, had not his majesty been prevented by du Guast. Marguerite then promised him her protection and that of all the above personages, including M. de Villequier, whose patronage would undoubtedly be given to the person who removed from his path his envied rival.[1] Fewer inducements would have sufficed to buy the murderous weapon of the baron de Viteaux. He promised the queen of Navarre that her will should be obeyed, but declined to state the method or period of its execution.

The queen of Navarre, and those interested in the fall of the favourite, had not long to await the blow.

[1] De Thou: Hist. de Notre Temps, liv. lxi. p. 300. Recueil des Choses Mémorables.

On the eve of All Saints Day, 1575, while the bells of all the churches of Paris were tolling, as was then customary, Viteaux executed his design. The noise, and the few persons passing in the streets—for the churches were filled with worshippers—favoured the perpetration of the crime. The baron, followed by a few bravoes, his ordinary associates, proceeded to the abode of the marquis, and carelessly mingled in the crowd of lacqueys awaiting their masters who had attended the *coucher* of the powerful favourite. Gradually the throng dispersed as the marquis's visitors took leave, until Viteaux and his followers remained alone. Viteaux then deliberately gagged the porter, and leaving him in the hands of two of his companions, ascended the staircase followed by the remainder, and knocked at the door of du Guast's apartment. A page opened the door, and at once admitted them. The marquis was in bed reading. The baron without preamble whatever sprang on his defenceless victim, and stabbed him in several places, and finally rolled the body from the bedstead on to the floor. So sudden was the attack, that the unfortunate marquis had not time even to grasp the sword which lay by his pillow. Meanwhile the confederates of de Viteaux pursued and despatched with their poniards three of du Guast's servants, who attempted to aid their master. Two valets threw themselves from a window upon the roof of the adjacent house; another scrambled up the chimney: but not a single domestic opposed the retreat of the assassins; so that nothing was known of the foul deed until some hours after its perpetration, when the marquis du Guast was found dead on the floor of his chamber. Viteaux and his associates made instantly for the ramparts, which they scaled by a cord previously prepared, and suspended from the city

wall.[1] Horses were in waiting; the fugitives mounted, and flying to the camp of the duc d'Alençon, Viteaux was the first to announce to Monsieur the fall of his foe.

The fury and grief of king Henry were indescribable; he sent for the presidents of the parliament, and commanded a rigorous investigation of the circumstances. The servants of the marquis were arrested, and subjected to severe interrogatories to elicit the name of the assassin; but as Viteaux wore a mask of white crape, the witnesses could not speak positively to his identity. Gradually, however, the names of du Guast's potent enemies oozed out; and there being no doubt that the assassin, whoever he might be, was their agent, the king dared not pursue the investigation. Indeed, after the first vehement outpouring of Henry's grief, the king himself relaxed in his energy, being discouraged by the cold disregard manifested by Villequier, who now reigned without rival. "The king also," says de Thou, "was not perhaps, in his heart, sorry to lose a favourite whose lofty spirit he deemed suspicious; and whom he always feared as a censor, stern and imperious—who unsparingly rebuked the luxury which had so much charm for the king—and who always tried to inspire him with thoughts and aspirations becoming to his dignity." Queen Marguerite in her Memoirs thus alludes to the fall of her enemy: "Le Guast," says she, "was killed by a just stroke of Divine judgment whilst he was undergoing a course of sanative renovation. Nevertheless, his body, polluted by all kinds of dissipation, was given up to that corruption which for long had consumed it; and his soul

[1] L'Etoile: Journal de Henri III. Recueil des Choses Mémorables. Dreux de Radier: Vie de Marguerite de Valois. Brantôme. De Coste: Eloges des Dauphins de France.

to the demons, whom he served by abominable practices of magic and every other kind of wickedness." Marguerite skilfully glosses over her share in the deed; her vengeance, however, had been understood, and none of the other *mignons* of the king dared directly provoke her hostility. Marguerite in her Memoirs smoothly glides over the various charges made against her by contemporary historians, by libellers, or by her own near kindred, and adopts throughout a simplicity of tone perfectly entertaining, as if she were the most injured and immaculate of princesses. Assuredly, however, Marguerite played no insignificant part in the early annals of a court in which the most unscrupulous plotter earned the highest distinction. The passions so early sown in the heart of Marguerite—her indignation at the apathy displayed by her relatives to punish her defamers—and the thirst for vengeance which she cherished, the more vehement for its long repression,—now gushed forth. Her beauty and address were the arms with which she ventured to combat the power of the throne. The trivial persecutions in which king Henry indulged awoke in Marguerite's mind the bitterest scorn, and constantly irritated the worst points of her character. The weapons of defiance, ridicule, opposition, and deceit were arrayed at her bidding whenever fate conducted the queen of Navarre into the presence of Henry III., the brother whom she had once loved, to use her own words, "*plus qu'elle-même.*" It was this hate that drove the queen of Navarre to make common cause with Monsieur.[1] The rebellion against the authority of Henry III., which Catherine was absent in the hope of appeas-

[1] The queen of Navarre perfectly appreciated the insincerity of the character of the duc d'Alençon. Marguerite was often heard to exclaim, "Que si toute l'infidélité était bannie de la terre, Monsieur la pourroit repeupler!"

ing, was as much the revolt of queen Marguerite, as of the duc d'Alençon. It was with Marguerite that Monsieur had consulted and arranged his measures; and to whom he had submitted the draught of his intended proclamations. The smiles of his sister won for Monsieur adherents without number; while the keenness of her wit, on more than one occasion, sheltered him when cowering beneath the penetrating scrutiny of Catherine de Medici. With the queen her mother Marguerite was more submissive; yet Catherine even, she dared sometimes provoke by her ironical retorts. Between Marguerite and the king her husband there existed not a particle of affection: they tolerated each other's society, because such concession was to the interest of both; for the *bonhomie* of Henri de Navarre assimilated ill with the artificial graces of his consort. By a mutual understanding the queen of Navarre defended her husband from the machinations of her kindred, by giving him timely notice of any extraordinary project that came to her knowledge for the molestation of the Huguenots; while Henri permitted her to pursue unmolested her brilliant, reckless, and pleasure-loving career.

King Henry solaced his mortification at the "enterprise perpetrated on the marquis du Guast," by commanding most sumptuous obsequies, which all the chief courtiers attended. He was interred in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, before the high altar; and the king subsequently raised a superb tomb over the remains of his favourite, to the great indignation of the people of Paris.

Catherine, meanwhile, still continued at Châtelleraud, inhabiting the castle which appertained to her son-in-law the king of Navarre. Finding that she could prevail nothing with Monsieur to induce him to make unqualified submission, Catherine determined to release

Montmorency, and to employ him as a mediator between the king and the party in arms. Great faith must the queen have reposed in the virtue and patriotism of Montmorency to believe, after the unmerited sufferings which she had inflicted, that in her necessity he would generously come to her aid. Accordingly the queen caused the marshal to be visited by agents of her own, who sounded his intentions, and then offered him freedom, provided that he laid aside his resentment and joined her majesty in negotiating a permanent and advantageous peace. The marshal magnanimously assented; and faithfully acting up to his past protestations, declared that the welfare of his country was his first solicitude.[1] He demanded, however, that letters patent should first pass the great seal restoring him to freedom, and stating that no crime whatever had been charged against him. This avowal of his past injustice Henry hesitated not to make: the letters stated,[2] "that the king on his accession found his dear and well-beloved brother-in-law François duc de Montmorency[3] a prisoner in his castle of the Bastille; and that not being able to ascertain any crime he had committed, after due inquiry made from the queen, the princes, the chancellor, and law officers of the crown, who each and all attested on oath that the late king never alleged any offence by the said duke perpetrated, his majesty having at length been graciously pleased to hear the statement of the said duke, he finding that he had been committed to prison on the testimony of false witnesses, had decreed his liberation."

[1] Hist. de la Maison de Montmorency. Additions aux Mém. de Castelnau, par l'Abbé le Laboureur. Eloge du Maréchal de Montmorency: De Thou.

[2] Lettres Patentes données au Maréchal de Montmorency verifiées au Parlement: Registres du Parlement de Paris.

[3] The marshal was the husband of Diane de France, legitimated daughter of the late king Henry II., the husband of queen Catherine.

Montmorency set out immediately, accompanied by Cossé, to meet the queen at Champigny, the mansion of the duc de Montpensier, where Monsieur had readily promised to confer with her majesty on condition that the marshal acted as mediator. During the whole of the month of October the conferences continued; Monsieur doggedly insisting on the conditions proposed by his party, and refusing to depart from their exact letter. The chief points were, toleration for those of the reformed faith; and the convocation of the States-general to remedy the ruined condition in which all branches of the government had fallen. Catherine had neither the power nor the will to grant these articles. She dreaded the meeting of the States; as the Huguenot deputies had then announced their intention of proposing "that the queen and her ministers should give account of their administration, and the disposal of the public funds during the minority of Charles IX., and pending her majesty's brief regency on the accession of Henry III." After much dissension, a truce for six months was determined upon; the conditions being eminently favourable to the duke and his cause. The king undertook to pay 160,000 livres to the German levies made by Condé, who were to await on the frontier the negotiation of a permanent peace. Six towns were to be ceded to the malcontents, namely, Angoulême, Niort, Saumur, Bourges, Charité, and Mezière; but at the expiration of the truce these places were to be restored to the king, whether peace was concluded or not. The king undertook meantime to defray the expenses of the garrison of these places. It was, moreover, covenanted that deputies should proceed to Paris during the month of January, 1576, to propose articles for a permanent peace.[1]

[1] Bouillon. Cheverny. De Thou. Davila. La Popelinière. Dupleix. Villegomblain, année 1575.

The execution of these conditions met with considerable difficulty. The commandants of Bourges and Angoulême steadily refused to cede these places to Monsieur, notwithstanding the repeated mandates sent by the king. They alleged that, having faithfully served his majesty against the Huguenots and the lords of the faction, they, by ceding the towns under their command, would have no refuge from their enemies; and alleging the recent fall of du Guast as a circumstance justifying their disobedience. The duc de Montpensier, therefore, was forced to retreat from before Angoulême, whither he had journeyed to place Monsieur in possession. The queen, aware that the German levies would be across the frontier ere the king's rebellious lieutenants could be brought to terms, again summoned the duc d'Alençon, and, after much cajolery, succeeded in inducing him to accept the towns of Coguac and Saint Jean d'Angely in lieu of Bourges and Angoulême. Bussy d'Amboise at the same time took possession of Saumur and Charité, while Niort was ceded to St. Gelais, aide-de-camp to Monsieur. These humiliating preliminaries achieved, the queen obtained the proclamation of the truce, November 22nd, in the camp of the malcontents, her majesty having previously consented to leave the maréchal de Montmorency with the duc d'Alençon.

The king during the latter part of the month of November commenced to make unusual exertion for the prosecution of the war, just at the time when policy required that no hostile indications should be made. He enrolled a body of 6000 Swiss, and entered into negotiation with Schomberg, Bassompierre, and the count Mansfeldt, for a levy of 8000 mercenary troops. These generals journeyed to Paris to confer with the king, and agreed to raise the succour demanded on

condition that Henry paid down 100,000 crowns,[1] and promised a further sum of 450,000 crowns when the troops crossed the French frontier. To enable himself to adhere to these engagements, the king during the following month of December convened an assembly in the Hôtel de Ville, and boldly demanded from the city of Paris an aid of 200,000 crowns. The greatest discontent and coldness were manifested by the citizens; and, instead of that enthusiastic loyalty demonstrated for Henry's father when, after the battle of St. Quentin, Henry II. demanded a similar succour, which was voted by acclamation, the assembly asked for leisure to deliberate. At the expiration of three days a deputation proceeded to the Louvre to carry the response of his majesty's liegemen of Paris. The king was attended by Villequier, the king of Navarre, and the chief lords of his court. The address was delivered in the name of the parliament of Paris, the judicial courts, the clergy, and the burgesses of the capital. Never previously had sovereign of France received so stern a censure as that conveyed by this address. Those historians who view the subsequent troubles of the League as the machinations of a faction alone, not participated in by the people at large, must disregard the repeated indications of popular hate and distrust shown at this and other anterior periods for Henry III. The very tone of the voice of the speakers admitted into the royal presence, it is said, added bitterness to their remonstrances, as their eyes rested on the figure of the effeminate, befrilled, and bejewelled "homme-femme" whom it was their misfortune to salute as king. The address commenced by comments on the deplorable

[1] Thirty thousand pounds sterling, according to king Henry's own computation, given in a despatch to Fénélon to be communicated to Elizabeth queen of England.

condition of the kingdom, torn by feuds, jealousies, and factions. During the previous fifteen years of warfare it was shown that the city of Paris had given the sum of three millions of livres, and the clergy of the capital the sum of seven millions, for the service of the state. "And for what purpose have these sums served, but to array France against herself, and to render her the prey of the first tyrant who would crush out her liberty and prosperity for his own aggrandizement? Sire, the anger of the Most High is smiting us for our corruptions and wickednesses, our revolts, and the maladministration which has caused them!" The speaker next asserted that the scandalous morals and simoniacal practices of the clergy needed reform; that the administration of justice was corrupted—"for, since the shameful traffic in state-offices, where, sire, do we find the integrity, probity, and enlightened judgment which once were the illustrious distinction of our parliament? So lofty then being its repute, that foreign princes appealed to its judgments, and accepted its decrees!" The address next touched on the reckless appropriation of public moneys destined for charitable purposes; it commented on the sum of 300,000 crowns which the king in the space of six months had recently squandered on his favourites; it stated that the people of the realm were reduced almost to penury; that commerce was annihilated; and that the universal indigence of all classes consummated the general ruin. The harangue concluded by a direct refusal to levy further funds for the use of the king, or to grant a subsidy. A stringent exhortation was added that peace should at any rate be concluded on terms just, honourable, and therefore stable. When subjects so addressed the sovereign, that sovereign being the despotic monarch of France, the first cloud of the coming troubles rose looming on the horizon. The orator of the city of Paris next pre-

sented the king with a copy of the golden rules of St. Louis, which that saintly monarch left for the guidance of his posterity, praying the king to heed the counsels of a prince so faithful and beloved by God and man. Henry listened to this exordium with frowning impatience. Villequier, who stood on his master's right hand, suddenly strode forward, and, with his hand on his sword, demanded "how the orator had dared to forget his respect for the majesty of the sovereign?" In reply the speaker presented to the king a written copy of his oration, signed by the chief members of the parliament, the courts, and the clergy, stating that he had been ordered to lay the address at his majesty's feet after reading it, that it might receive the royal consideration. Villequier was about to utter another severe comment, when the king interposed. Bitterly complaining of the disrespectful tone of the oration, the king said "that it was now the time for action, and not for the ill-judged display of affected patriotism. Without doubt," said his majesty, "I shall find subjects faithful in their sovereign's emergency to aid me with funds without further appeal to the city of Paris." The deputation then withdrew, the king waving his hand in token of dismissal.[1] This repulse, nevertheless, stung the king into acts of greater vigour. He wrote to the queen his mother requesting her instant return; for Henry began to feel that, without Catherine's tact, judgment, and experience, the burdens of royalty might soon become unbearable.

The queen, therefore, set out, after bidding farewell to her son d'Alençon, emphatically entreating him to observe the conditions of the truce, and to dispose those with whom he was in league to combine for the ratification of a final peace. The queen by her dexterous

[1] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lxi. pp. 296–8. L'Etoile: Journal de Henri III. Mém. de Nevers.

manœuvring had obtained time. Moreover, her majesty's insinuations, and her frequent private conferences with Monsieur, had raised a suspicion concerning the nature of the duke's relations with the court; and the malcontents began to deem it just possible, considering the antecedents of the prince, that, having stipulated for his own interests, he might some fine morning plan a return to Paris as adroitly as he had quitted the capital. Two of the aims of Catherine's personal negotiation being thus achieved, the queen returned in complacent mood, feeling that the peace so requisite for the realm would be one of her own dictation rather than that of the confederates. The contentment of Henry was unbounded at the proclamation of this truce, which, at any rate, as he remarked, would stave off any catastrophe for the period of six months. He published a proclamation announcing this satisfactory result of the queen-mother's journey; and wrote to Fénélon and his other ambassadors requesting them to notify the event to the courts to which they were accredited; and, as a final mark of satisfaction, he set out to meet Catherine at Etampes, and escorted her back to Paris.[1]

Such was the situation of affairs when the king's satisfaction was abated by two startling events, which must have inspired him with energy to combat the perils closing hopelessly around, had he ever in his life been animated by a genuine spirit of heroism. The army of Condé appeared on the frontier. The king in this emergency sent to notify the recent articles of the truce, to signify his willingness to perform the pecuniary convention he had accepted, and to command the disbandment of the force. The king's envoy was joined by an officer despatched by Monsieur, who, in the name of the duc d'Alençon, protested against the advance of the army pending the propositions about to

[1] Wednesday, January 28th, 1576.

be made to the queen-mother. Condé and the palatine Casimir responded by general assurances of their desire for peace and their reluctance to offend his majesty. Nevertheless, the prince continued his march, crossed the frontier near to Langres, and, advancing upon Dijon, mulcted the place in the sum of 200,000 francs. The fine old Chartreuse, the burial-place of the ancient dukes of Burgundy, escaped the brand of the destroyer by a further donation of 121,000 francs; while the château Lespaille, the magnificent property of the maréchal de Tavannes, was burnt to the ground. Condé's forces consisted of 10,000 German mercenaries, of 6,000 Swiss, and 2,000 French troops; in all 18,000 men. This formidable army crossed the Loire at Marsigny, ravaging the country and laying all the towns on its route under contribution. The province of Auvergne, by a gift of 50,000 crowns, succeeded in purchasing exemption from its devastating march. Monsieur, when informed of the advance of Condé, showed much chagrin, at least outwardly, and immediately addressed exculpatory letters to the parliament of Paris, protesting the purity of his intentions; the which were suppressed by royal command. The perplexity of the duc d'Alençon could not be surpassed. The utter disregard shown by the confederates for the truce which he had been pleased to conclude was most mortifying; while by remaining with the malcontents he subjected himself to the penalties of high treason. On the other hand, he beheld himself in virtue of his rank upon the eve of being hailed as generalissimo of the combined forces, the head of a powerful faction, able to balance the royal authority, and to arbitrate between the king and his subjects. Monsieur's vacillations on the part he had to take, however, were speedily decided by the unexpected flight of the king of Navarre from Paris; and the comparative indifference shown after that event by the confederates

as to the duke's ulterior proceedings, determined him to remain faithful to his allies rather than cede the command to Henri.

The king of Navarre had long pined for the refuge of his native Béarn. At the court of France he beheld himself oppressed, depreciated, and neglected; caressed by Henry when it suited his purpose, but treated in all matters as a dependent. After the departure of Monsieur the position of the king of Navarre became still more isolated: eclipsed by the arrogant favourites, on bad terms with his wife, and betrayed by his mistress, the fair madame de Sauve, who now began to bestow much of her favour upon the nobleman whom she eventually espoused for her second husband,[1] Henri panted for freedom. The rumours of war awoke the martial spirit in his bosom; and he longed to be restored to freedom, to serve his country, and to draw in her service the sword consecrated by the touch of Coligny and Jeanne d'Albret. Henri, therefore, demanded from the king some military command by which he might demonstrate his fidelity. "Mon frère," replied Henry, with an ironical smile, "I have something better for you in reserve." The king of Navarre quitted the royal presence, irritated and depressed, to learn a few hours afterwards that the king, in defiance of a promise he had made through Souvré, to bestow the first vacant captaincy of his body-guard on the vicomte de Lavardin, a near relative and adherent of the house of Albret—had nominated a *protégé* of Villequier. After the return of the queen-mother from Champigny, there had been various rumours that her majesty counselled the arrest of her son-in-law as a pre-

[1] The marquis de Noirmoustier, François de la Trémoille, whom she espoused October 13, 1581. Madame de Sauve was the rich heiress of Semblançay. She lost her first husband, M. de Sauve, November 27, 1579.

cautionary measure, lest he should join the duke. Marguerite, moreover, admonished her husband to hold himself on his guard. The king of Navarre, therefore, resolved to fly from Paris. The secret was confided to Fervaques, Roquelaure, and Epernon, young cavaliers of Henri's suite, brave, true, and loyal. The queen of Navarre was not admitted into her husband's confidence. Henri doubted whether Marguerite might not betray a secret fraught with personal consequences to herself; neither did he desire to expose her to the perils of being accessory to his evasion. When all was prepared, Henri asked and obtained permission to proceed to Senlis for the diversion of the chase. For several days he followed the pastime with ardour, and once during this interval surprised their majesties by a sudden visit. Every day he prolonged his excursions, the more easily to conceal his intended flight, and thus obtain several hours' advance of any pursuit. Fervaques, meanwhile, being enamoured of madame de Carnavalet,[1] inconsiderately let fall some hints of the project and of his own approaching departure in the hearing of that lady, who immediately declared her intention of warning Catherine. Overwhelmed with distress and remorse, Fervaques, not daring to quit the capital, despatched Roquelaure and Epernon to Henri to inform the latter of his indiscretion, and implore him to make the best of the time remaining to him. The cavaliers found Henri at Chantilly, where he was taking his mid-day repast. Epernon drew him aside and delivered Fervaques's message. With that prompt decision of purpose which during the

[1] Anne Hérault, daughter of the sieur de Beuil. This lady married, first, François de la Beaume, comte de Montreval; second, M. de Kernevenoy, commonly called Carnavalet, tutor to Henry III. This nobleman died in 1571, leaving his widow young, beautiful, and rich. Madame de Carnavalet resisted the matrimonial overtures of Fervaques, and also of M. d'Epernon before the latter attained, as he afterwards did, to the summit of courtly power and wealth.

subsequent wars contributed more than any other quality to ensure Henri's eventual triumph, the king summoned the sieur de St. Martin, captain of his body-guard. "Go to his majesty," exclaimed he, "and say that I have received positive information, that by the advice of queen Catherine he has the design to arrest me on the first convenient occasion; therefore that I intend to remain at Senlis until more fully informed of his majesty's pleasure concerning me." St. Martin arrived at the Louvre about midnight, and requested to speak with the marquis de Souvré, Henry's master of the robes and principal chamberlain. From Souvré he learned that his majesty had received notice of the proposed flight of the king of Navarre before retiring to bed; and intended early on the morrow to send an escort to bring his brother-in-law back to Paris, whom he believed to be ignorant that his project of evasion had transpired.

St. Martin then requested to be admitted to the royal chamber to deliver the message intrusted to him, believing that the king, on being informed of the design of his brother-in-law to remain at Senlis, would revoke any orders issued to prevent his flight, and that thus a public scandal might be avoided. Souvré, always actuated by the most conscientious of motives, assented, though at some risk of incurring the king's displeasure. The two accordingly boldly entered the royal chamber and aroused the king. Henry listened petulantly to St. Martin's message, and then replied: "My good Souvré, be assured that this said Henri de Navarre is no longer at Senlis! Had I the intentions he is pleased to ascribe to me, I should not have permitted him to go from the capital. God help me! I perceive that he also has some bad and traitorous intent!" St. Martin re-affirmed his belief that the king of Navarre had no evil intents, and was still at Senlis. The king

was too much accustomed to these surprises to believe this assertion: nevertheless, he ordered Souvré to go to Senlis; and if indeed the king of Navarre were there, to bring him to his *lever* the following morning. He also desired that the queen-mother might be informed of the errand of St. Martin. Souvré, who greatly esteemed the king of Navarre, before he consented to undertake the mission, exacted from Henry his word of honour that he intended no harm to his brother-in-law. Henry impatiently replied "that, on the contrary, it was his intent to cherish him more than ever!" The marquis therefore set out for Senlis; but before he had reached the little town of Louvres information was brought him of the flight of the king of Navarre, who by sending St. Martin to Paris had sought dexterously to avoid immediate pursuit. Henri, accompanied by Roquelaure, Epernon,[1] Frontenac, and Lavardin, quitted Chantilly as soon as St. Martin was off on his road to Paris, crossed the Seine, and fled to La Fere, from whence he repaired to Vendôme. From Vendôme Henri fled to Saumur, where, under the sheltering lances of two hundred brave Gascon gentlemen, who sallied to the succour of their prince, and the bands of Bussy d'Amboise, the king of Navarre abjured the Romish faith. His next act was to publish a Declaration, in which he stated that "all he had before done respecting his change of religion had been extorted from him by force and constraint. As his personal liberty was regained, his mental will resumed its empire; which he accordingly manifested by returning to his first religious creed; the which he protested for the future to maintain until death, according to the instruction given him by his deceased mother, queen Jeanne of

[1] This young nobleman, who afterwards played so conspicuous a *rôle*, was at this time called le chevalier de la Valette; but, to avoid confusion, his subsequent appellation has been given to him.

glorious and revered memory."[1] It is recorded by a gentleman of Henri's cortège, that before crossing the Loire at Saumur, the king seemed oppressed with melancholy. Presently he heaved a deep sigh, and reining in his horse by the banks of the river, he exclaimed, half in soliloquy, "Thanks be to God who has delivered me! My mother the queen died in Paris; there they slew M. l'amiral, and all our best and most trusty servants; for myself they had the same intentions, if God had not interposed." Then turning and addressing the gentlemen of his suite, Henri jestingly said: "Messieurs, I regret only two things that I have left behind me in Paris—the mass, and my wife! For the mass, I will try and dispense with it; but my wife I intend and will have her again." Followed by his companions, Henri pushed onwards. He was received with enthusiasm as he traversed the province of Guyenne; the flag of every fortress waved at his approach, and the people sallied forth in bands to welcome the son of Jeanne d'Albret. In his own principality the presence of the king of Navarre was celebrated by a general ovation; he had returned to his people—who remembered the tears shed by Jeanne d'Albret, and the bitter grief of her farewell as she departed from Pau for the court whence she never came back—safe, one with themselves again in faith, and too sternly admonished by the terrors of past events to yield again to the delusive flatteries of Catherine. The brave and patriotic heart of the Béarnnois Henri throbbed at such a welcome.[2]

[1] Mathieu, liv. vii. p. 427. Mémoires de la Reyne Marguerite. De Thou, liv. lxi. année 1576.

[2] Soon after the escape of the king of Navarre his friend and faithful ally, Elizabeth, queen of England, wrote him a letter of condolence and encouragement. "When I reflect, my very dear brother," writes her majesty, "that nothing saps the sources of life more surely than despondency, or that few things act more fatally on the health than the senti-

The condition of the "right noble realm of France," during this spring of 1576, presented indeed an aspect most ruinous and desolate; and unhappily the strong but corrosive cement of the League alone proved potent enough to bind together again the shattered fragments. The people obeyed the chieftain ruling over each province, and forgot that a king reigned in Paris. Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiny owed allegiance to the brothers of Montmorency—Damville, Thoré, and Meru. Béarn, Guyenne, and a portion of Vendômmois rallied under the standard of Albret. The midland provinces of the realm bowed before the duc d'Alençon. On the frontier, and encamped in the interior of Burgundy, Bourbonnois, and on the plains of Soze, lay an army of mercenary troops now thirty thousand strong, commanded by a Condé. In the ports of La Rochelle the English flag floated in hostile array against the effete and treacherous government, pouring treasures, troops, and provisions into the city, the storehouse and arsenal of the Calvinists.

Socially all things displayed a like desolation. Justice was corrupted—a ban from one of the powerful favourites being sufficient to blast the most righteous cause. Unscrupulous appropriations were made by one branch of the government, commencing with the court, upon the funds destined for the due discharge of the functions of another. The power of veto was almost denied to that august body the parliament of Paris—a privilege once exercised so beneficially during the reigns of Louis XII. and Francis I. The registration of

ment of passionate indignation, I assure you that the delay and procrastination of the princes of Germany, and the tardy resolutions of those most tardy allies, inflict upon me almost a daily death. I beg you, however, to believe that, as far as regards my own actions, I hold your welfare too much at heart to fail in aught that I have undertaken on your behalf."—Lettre d'Elisabeth Reyne d'Angleterre au Roy de Navarre: MS. Bibl. Imp. Colbert, vol. xxix. Fontanieu, portef. 337.

edicts was now enforced by absolute royal command; while the remonstrances of the chambers met with such discountenance and ridicule that they virtually ceased to be offered. Public morality was sunk to the lowest ebb; the profligacy of the court infected all classes. The wife and daughter of no man, whether of rank illustrious or humble, was safe from pollution; while during this reign such became the fearful ascendency of vice, that even women deemed virtue a reproach, and deliberately participated in orgies the most obscene. The clergy contributed their share to this universal declension; incited during the first outbreak of the reformed tenets to the practice of something resembling outward morality and zeal, all restraint had been now cast aside. The convents of Paris were converted into resorts for the young lords of the court; the abbesses being frequently the all-but recognized mistresses of potent nobles. The religious controversies of the past fifteen years had had the most deplorable effect on the faith of the people; they had forgotten the high and holy principles contended for in these discussions; their hearts were hardened and their intellect confused, as it so often happens, by propositions and counter-tenets, until the faculty of descrying truth departed from them. The majority of the people, therefore, had become atheists or rationalists: they scoffed at the ceremonies of the church, and derided that system of penance and absolution which one day exhibited to them their king parading the streets, arrayed in tattered garments or sackcloth, attended by the pompous adjuncts of the Romish Church; and the next, voluptuously drifting down the Seine in his painted gondola, surrounded by a troop of courtezans.

The universal disorganization of society, morals, and religion must before this period have terminated in anarchy, before which every vestige of the ancient

régime would have disappeared, but for queen Catherine, who was the ballast that gave semblance of steadiness to the sinking vessel of state. The government being suspended, as it were, on her policy, when one fine thread of diplomacy broke, Catherine supplied another; so that, by ever originating new devices and counteracting old ones, she had continued to temporize and to rule.

The return of Souvré with the intelligence that the king of Navarre was on his road into Guyenne roused the anger of the king to such a degree, that his ministers began to believe it possible that Henry would himself take the field, and signalize his valour as in days of yore. The royal wrath, however, fell chiefly upon queen Marguerite, whom Henry accused of conspiracy with his foes, and of treason in not having notified the intentions of her husband to the council of state. "Such was the anger of the king," writes Marguerite, "that I believe, had he not been restrained by the queen my mother, he would have executed some enterprise against my life." Henry had more than one grudge to avenge on his sister; and he therefore determined that the flight of her husband should be the pretext for Marguerite's arrest. Perceiving that her son was too exasperated to listen to expostulation, Catherine agreed to the measure, stipulating, however, that she herself should break the king's determination to Marguerite. It is doubtful, however, whether the queen, despite her protests, did not covertly approve of the project of arrest; for in the consternation arising from the occurrence of one portentous event after another, it was dangerous to leave so keen an observer as the queen of Navarre at liberty, without knowing exactly how far she might be implicated. Catherine accordingly proceeded to the apartment of the queen of Navarre, whom she found at her toilette; for Margue-

rite was impatient to hear particulars of the flight of her husband and of its consequent effect. "Ma fille," commenced the queen; "you need not to-day take the needless pains of arraying yourself. Do not be angry at hearing that which I am here to tell you. You have great understanding, therefore I feel assured that you will not be surprised at hearing that the king is strangely incensed against your brother and the king your husband. His majesty being aware of the intimacy between you three, believes that you were privy to the evasion of both, and has therefore determined to regard you as a hostage. The king has, therefore, commanded that guards shall be stationed at your doors, to prevent you from leaving your apartments. His majesty's counsellors have, moreover, represented to him that, if you were suffered to mingle freely amongst us, you would betray our plans and movements to your brother or to your husband. I pray God, my daughter, that you may take these precautions in good part, and submit cheerfully." Marguerite replied by acknowledging that she had aided in Monsieur's deliverance; but denied participation in the evasion of the king of Navarre; stating that, since the dismissal of mademoiselle de Torigny, she had scarcely spoken a word to her husband. "Ma fille," rejoined the queen, "what you state is only a confession of a matrimonial squabble, which will soon pass over; a few loving letters from your husband will win you back. You know, madame, that, if your said husband were to bid you go to him, you would obey, and escape from us yourself?"

Catherine then took her leave, first praying her daughter not to feel herself aggrieved if she could not visit her as often as the desire might arise. Marguerite's grief and indignation were excessive, for her arrest proved not a lenient or a mere nominal restraint. On

the departure of the queen, guards were posted at the door, and in the corridor upon which Marguerite's apartments opened, and, according to their orders, refused the pass to any one. In this sad condition Marguerite remained for upwards of two months, "during which," writes she, "I saw no one, not even my most intimate friends, for no one dared ask to visit me, fearing to achieve their own ruin." Catherine never paid her daughter a single visit; which fact tends to confirm the supposition that Marguerite's durance had her assent; for the queen was not habitually awed by the threats of her son the king, nor yet did she think herself bound to obey his mandates. One personage alone braved the anger of the king, and persisted in demanding occasional permission to visit queen Marguerite—and this was her husband's valiant friend Crillon. The latter brought her several letters from the king of Navarre, who wrote most consolatory epistles, praying Marguerite to pardon his past defections, and still to continue his good friend and ally. These letters Marguerite acknowledges afforded her much comfort; her melancholy isolation disposed the queen to grant their prayer; so that once more confidential communications were revived, as Catherine had predicted, between the royal pair. Marguerite's feelings of hostility towards the king were not lessened by his oppression; for of the immediate cause occasioning her arrest she was innocent. Moreover, Henry in his insane passion proceeded to execute other and subsidiary schemes of retaliation, which exhibited his character in a light as puerile as it was contemptible. It appears that the king still nourished a vehement grudge against mademoiselle de Torigny, who, as it has been related, in obedience to a previous mandate, had retired from the service of the queen of Navarre and taken up her abode with her near connexions, M. de Chastelus and

his wife. The king and Villequier, in discussing the flight of the king of Navarre, made out to each other's satisfaction that mademoiselle de Torigny was privy to the plot; and that she had not only aided in its execution, but had encouraged her late royal mistress to persevere in a deportment so contumacious and offensive. Henry, accordingly, despatched a troop of archers of his guard to conduct mademoiselle de Torigny to his presence, there to answer for her alleged connivance. The soldiers had directions to perpetrate on the road the most scandalous outrage, by plunging their trembling captive in the Seine. Marguerite asserts that the king gave orders that mademoiselle de Torigny should be drowned; other narrators, however, ascribe to Henry the scarcely less flagrant intent of so terrifying her as to make her avoid for the future the perilous game of politics. The royal guards, accordingly, set forth. They surrounded the abode of M. de Chastelus, and some of them entering the house, seized mademoiselle de Torigny, and roughly bound her hands. They next locked her up in a chamber while they sat down, at the invitation of the master of the house, to make a hearty meal. This *ruse* enabled M. de Chastelus to gain time to seek for succour to rescue his young cousin from the death which his majesty's envoys declared themselves commissioned to inflict. He accordingly sent emissaries forth; and most providentially one of them met a party of horse, commanded by M. d'Avantigny, *en route* to join the duc d'Alençon before Moulins. On hearing the peril of mademoiselle de Torigny, d'Avantigny immediately proceeded to the rescue, partly from humane motives, but more especially on account of the *entente* which existed between the queen of Navarre and her brother. They found the ruffians about to tie the poor girl on a horse; for in such ignominious plight had Henry decreed that the

daughter of one of his greatest generals should enter Paris. Mademoiselle de Torigny lay weeping in the arms of her cousin, who was vainly expostulating against such outrage. A skirmish ensued, in which d'Avantigny's troop, being much the most numerous, had the advantage, the archers of the guard flying for their lives. Mademoiselle de Torigny was then placed in a coach, and, accompanied by Madame de Chastelus, escorted by her deliverers to Moulins, where she was received by the duc d'Alençon, who "treated the said de Torigny with the same honour and respect as if her mistress the queen of Navarre had been present.[1]

So cowardly an outrage upon his young daughter could not have increased the ardour of the maréchal de Matignon for the royal cause, although a feeling of patriotism, or the less pure motive of personal interest, then induced him to dissimulate his indignation. As for the queen of Navarre, neither prudence nor regard for the repute of her brother the king, induced her to repress her transports of wrath when she heard of the indignities to which her favourite Torigny had been subjected. Fortunately, perhaps, for herself, Marguerite at this juncture was a captive, else her irritation might have rendered her capable of some enterprise which, as a daughter of France, she must eventually have regretted.

During this interval the king's pecuniary necessities had been temporarily alleviated by the loan made to him by the duc de Nevers of the proceeds of the sale of some estates in Flanders appertaining to his consort the duchesse Henriette,[2] who was understood to be greatly averse to such a disposal of her patrimony. M. de Pienne followed the example of Nevers, and

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite.' Dreux de Radier. Vie de Marguerite de Valois. Hist. de la Maison de Matignon.

[2] Heiress of a junior branch of the house of Clèves.

presented Henry with a seasonable benefaction. The king assigned to these nobles, as security for the debt, a revenue on the royal domains in the duchy of Bretagne.

The greatest and most unusual activity, meanwhile, prevailed in Paris to provide funds, men, and, above all, a general to command the army preparing to oppose the princes. The command-in-chief was again offered to Montpensier, and this time by the queen in person. The duke, however, again declined to serve against the duc d'Alençon, "*ne voulant mettre le doigt entre deux pierres.*" His wife, Catherine de Lorraine, sister of the duc de Guise, vehemently opposed such a project. This princess was ever actuated by passions the most fervid and unrestrained. A bigot in faith, a despot in principle, of courage that no peril could daunt, of spirit astute as that of the queen-mother's, a hand that dared all, and a tongue eloquent with the power of flaying sarcasm,—such was the duchesse de Montpensier. These formidable characteristics were rendered the more to be dreaded by the beauty of the duchess, the dignity of whose lineage of Lorraine shone in every outward act; while she never forgot the splendour of her descent from Charlemagne and St. Louis. From Henry's accession unsparing warfare had been declared between himself and the duchesse de Montpensier. The masculine mind of Catherine de Lorraine scoffed at the royal puerility; and her wit was exercised so audaciously when in the presence, that Henry writhed with indignant mortification. The king testified his displeasure by repeated acts of petty spite; from the ashes of which, however, the sarcasm of the duchess rose, invested with points still more racy and *piquants*. The empire which the duchess exercised over her husband, who was many years her senior, was great; and in the matter of the command-in-chief offered to him,

as her wishes coincided with the duke's political theories, her aid proved eminently useful in helping him to resist the importunity of the court. As no concession was to be obtained from Montpensier, the duc de Mayenne was appointed generalissimo; yet so doubtful did their majesties feel of the loyalty of their general—who was the brother of Guise and the duchesse de Montpensier—that they forthwith began to concert for the means of concluding a peace, if only to disband the levies encamped within the realm. This expedient had formerly been successfully adopted by the queen during the religious war which convulsed France in the early years of the reign of Charles IX. The peace of Lonjumeaux, A. D. 1568, had been signed by Catherine for the express purpose, as it afterwards appeared, of dissolving the hostile confederation between Coligny and the Protestant princes of Europe. The differences which already divided the councils of the confederates seemed to Catherine to afford an opening for the fresh exercise of that marvellous political craft which was now designated by the disaffected of the realm as "*les enchantements de la reyne-mère.*"

The active correspondence continually going on between Monsieur and the court occasioned amongst the confederates great and reasonable jealousies. On the plains of Soze the duc d'Alençon had been saluted as generalissimo of the army levied by the tact of Condé and the wealth of M. de Thoré. These chieftains naturally felt chagrin at relinquishing their posts of pre-eminence to a prince of no military or moral repute, and whose adhesion to the cause was held in doubt. Damville, at this juncture, when the success of the cause was thus in balance against the private interests of individuals, deviated from his general patriotic disinterestedness. He feared lest the triumph of the allies would lead to the loss or diminution of his

rule over Languedoc, which province he governed with the irresponsibility of hereditary dominion. His pretended aid in the pacification of the broils and jealousies of the camp, therefore, tended rather to the promotion of discord. The palatine Casimir, on his side, manifested the greatest discontent, having marched into France, as he averred, "to conquer and to acquire," and not to remain in camp absorbed by insignificant cavils. The vigilant eye of the queen-mother carefully scanned the surface of this outwardly compact confederation, to detect any fissure through which, by the skilful insertion of the wedge of royal concession, a passage might be driven so as in due time to annihilate the whole. By her counsel, therefore, the king gave condescending greetings to the two envoys sent by the confederates to state the grounds of their complaints and the demands of the princes, ere the hostile army advanced on the capital. They were dismissed with assurances of redress; and departed the harbingers of Catherine's second visit to the camp of her son the duc d'Alençon.

Before taking this momentous progress the queen earnestly insisted on the release of her daughter Marguerite; at the same time showing the king a letter from Monsieur, in which he admonished his mother that her journey would be useless unless she was accompanied by his sister. "For," said the duke, "never will I listen to overture of peace whatever, until my said sister is satisfied and at liberty." The queen, therefore, advised Henry to countermand the guard he had set; to send for Marguerite, and by promises, apologies, and caresses to allay her resentment. Henry knew his mother too well to resist her counsels, especially in so grave an emergency as the present. Catherine, therefore, immediately sent one of her chamberlains with an order from the king commanding the presence of the

queen of Navarre in the royal closet. After some considerable delay, Marguerite made her appearance, haughty, resentful, and not one whit subdued by the loneliness of her prison. She found her mother alone. "Ma fille," commenced Catherine, "I have, by the mercy of God, disposed all things for a general reconciliation. You and your brother Alençon have always desired to promote a solid and universal peace, and now is the time for the realization of that wish. Aid me, therefore, ma fille, in this work: you will rescue me thereby from the great affliction of witnessing the triumph of one of my sons over the other. Employ your good offices to this end with your brother. Forget the harshness with which you have been treated. No one now regrets it more than your brother the king, whom I have often seen to shed tears over this dissension, and who is ready to make you every reparation in his power." Marguerite loftily replied "that she should never prefer her own interests to the welfare of the realm; and that she was ready to sacrifice her just resentment to promote that end, and would therefore aid in the negotiation of peace." The king then entered as if by accident, and advancing towards his sister, kissed her hand, and then embraced her with seeming cordiality. The king then informed Marguerite "that their mother was about to take a second journey into Champagne to negotiate a peace, and that he prayed her very earnestly to deign to accompany her majesty, and to contribute her good offices thereto." Marguerite merely curtseyed, and then retired. She found that the news of her intended liberation had already spread over the court, and that many of her friends awaited her in her apartments, amongst whom was the duchesse de Nevers. It was during her captivity of two months that Marguerite acquired, as she states, that love for literature and poetry for which she

was afterwards distinguished; and that subsequently, during two decades of virtual incarceration, ameliorated her destiny. Many books were given to her by Crillon during his visits. Marguerite rejected with disgust the manuals of devotion liberally supplied for her use by command of king Henry, who ever deemed himself a paragon of propriety while perpetrating acts of most flagrant injustice. She perused Homer during this interval, and expresses herself ravished with the vigour of his phraseology and the grandeur of his imagery. Marguerite also essayed her hand at the composition of poetry. But, despite the resources supplied by her needle and her books, the queen found the period of her arrest one of unsurpassed *ennui* and weariness. It is difficult to picture the beautiful and coquettish Marguerite de Valois, with her love of independence, her sumptuous toilette and numerous adorers, confined during eight dreary weeks in three small chambers of the Louvre, with only a single occasional visitor to break the spell of her solitude. Queen Louise seems to have had little sympathy for her enterprising sister-in-law. The feuds and the depravity of the court oppressed the gentle queen; besides, the extraordinary character of her husband was for long the subject of her perpetual speculation.

Queen Marguerite, therefore, joyfully made preparation to accompany the queen-mother to the more congenial scene of the camp of the allies. Catherine selected a brilliant band of ladies for her escort—allies potent, as she had found, during many a political crisis, to charm, seduce, and persuade. For the subjugation of Monsieur madame de Sauve again went forth—the beautiful widow madame de Carnavalet appointed a trysting-place for Fervaques and Epernon in the camp of Moulins. Besides, there was a bevy of young beauties, such as mesdemoiselles de Bretesche, d'Estrées, de

Montal—the stars of the court. The duchesse de Nevers also followed the queen, who had often observed the effect produced by the coquettish blandishments of the former. The duchess gave the most brilliant *réunions* in Paris, and was universally popular and sought. Then, to sting into vigour the torpid intellects of Monsieur, of Condé, and his officers, when satiated with the allurements and pleasures set before them, went forth the duchesse de Montpensier; and last of the queen's suite, though not least in influence, madame de Villequier, the wife of the dominant favourite.

By the end of April Catherine set out for Touraine, in which province the conferences were to be holden, accompanied by her brilliant convoy and by the maréchal de Montmorency, without whose assistance the queen pretended to be unable to accomplish anything. Her majesty proceeded to Plessis-les-Tours, where she took up her abode, pending her communication with the duc d'Alençon and the princes his allies.

CHAPTER IV.

1576 — 1577.

Council of the confederates at Moulins—Articles there agreed upon—Conferences at Beaulieu—Articles of peace—Schemes of king Henry to levy money—His success—Indignation excited throughout the country by the clauses of the treaty of Beaulieu—Rise of the League—Its objects and various articles—Retreat of prince Casimir—The king visits Rouen and Dieppe—Libels and satirical verses circulated respecting king Henry—Edict for the convocation of the States-general to meet at Blois—Departure of the king and queen for Olinville—Don Juan of Austria visits France—His conferences with the duc de Guise at Joinville—Interview between the king and his brother M. d'Anjou—Their mutual dissatisfaction—The states of Blois—Extravagant costume of king Henry—Relations of Marguerite queen of Navarre and the duc de Guise—Closing of the States—Condition of the realm—Exploits of the duc d'Anjou—Banquets given by the court—The king departs for Poitiers—Edict of Poitiers—Assassination of madame de Villequier—Comet of 1577.

THE confederated princes, meanwhile, held council in Moulins to decide upon the terms to be proposed to king Henry and his mother as the alternative of immediate hostilities. Deputies from the king of Navarre, from the duc de Damville and the Protestant population of "les trois évêchés" of Toul, Verdun, and Metz, arrived to take part in the deliberations. The articles agreed upon were sixty-two in number, and were so subversive of all past edicts ratified by the parliaments of the realm, that it is surprising the princes, unwarned by past experiences, could delude themselves by believ-

ing that such clauses would be received by the people at large, even if the emergencies of the government forced them upon the king. It was demanded, in the first place, as regarded the Huguenots of the realm, that unrestrained liberty should be given them in the exercise and promulgation of their religious worship and tenets, provided only that they obtained the assent of the nobles and lords of the manor in the various localities within which they desired to hold their *prêches*. The confederates demanded that all public offices should be open to the Calvinists—their rights as citizens being as fully defined and conceded as those of their Roman Catholic brethren; and that the children of married priests who had made abjuration should be declared legitimate. The king, moreover, was required to deny all share and connivance in the massacre of Paris, and to express his regret at so accursed a treachery. The processes instituted against Coligny, Montgomery, Cavagnes, and Briquemaut, la Mole, Coconnas, and Jean de la Haye, were to be annulled and erased from the registers of the courts, and these personages declared innocent, and good, and faithful subjects. The king was to recognize the duc d'Alençon, Condé, the king of Navarre, Damville, and other malcontents in arms, as loyal subjects; and to accept, ratify, and approve all their past acts. He was, moreover, to refund the sums expended in the levy of the German army; to pay all arrears for succours furnished to the Huguenots or to the royal cause during the past fifteen years; to augment the appanage of the duc d'Alençon; to convene the States-general; and to cede certain towns in the chief provinces of the realm as cities of refuge, and for guarantees to all concerned in the cause of freedom and political reform. The allies, moreover, reserved to themselves the right of proposing various subsidiary articles during their negotiation with the plenipotentiary

appointed by his majesty to treat for peace.[1] The ducs de Nevers, Nemours, and Montpensier, and the principal councillors of state, unanimously rejected such conditions, as contrary to the constitution of the realm and the principles, desires, and welfare of his majesty's subjects. They argued that a peace, to become beneficial, must necessarily be regarded as stable; while its stipulations ought not only to receive their ratification from the sign-manual of the king, but to find response in the minds of the people. The Protestant deputies from Moulins, Beauvais, le Nocle, and Davet, met with insulting taunts in the royal cabinet when admitted before the privy council to unfold their mission; while in the streets of Paris they were assailed with hootings and stones. The king, indirectly through Villequier, lieutenant-governor of Paris, again sounded the dispositions of his faithful lieges to aid him with pecuniary supplies; the parliament and municipality, however, obdurately declined to sanction the levy of a single livre. This resolve placed the king in a position of great perplexity. The treaty, as proposed by the confederates, had been rejected with universal indignation; but at the same time funds were refused for the prosecution of the war by the commons of the realm; while it was after the display of much reluctance that Henry had induced any of his generals to take the field. Catherine, as usual, in this emergency, was hailed the arbitress. Unhesitatingly she advised her son to accept the treaty as drawn by "his rebel kinsmen."—"Sire," exclaimed she, "accept! These articles which you are called upon to confirm will work their

[1] De Thou. Mezeray. Mémoire pour dissuader le Duc d'Alençon de la Guerre, &c.: MS. Bibl. Imp. Fontanieu, 339-40, 1575. Justification de Catherine de Medici sur sa Conduite entre Henri III. et le Duc d Alençon pour rétablir la Paix entre eux: MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 9118, fol. 56, 57, 58. Fontanieu, 339, et seq. MS.

own destruction. France will rise against the assumptions of these heretics; war will again flame forth; your brother will be detached from their cause; their army dispersed—and we shall eventually dictate the final terms of a pacification." The duc de Guise offered no counsel; he foresaw and waited for the rise of that third party, composed of men fervid in their outward zeal for the faith, and therefore opponents of the convention about to be concluded between the crown and the united factions of "Politiques and Huguenot." Catherine likewise predicted this new combination, but anticipated to be herself its oracle and leader. She, however, miscalculated its strength, fervour, and distrust. She forgot that, shaken by the political convulsions of the past sixteen years, the power of the crown would be too enfeebled to resist the innovations of a faction which assumed the title of protector of the civil and religious liberties of the people; for the ancient loyalty towards the descendant of St. Louis wavered. A most grievous error committed by the queen was her neglect to secure the sympathy and co-operation of that potent family which had originated the league of Péronne—the key, since the year 1558, to all subsequent troubles. Catherine, with all her astuteness, also forgot that which the Spanish ambassador Chantonnay, during the minority of Charles IX., had often been insolent enough to assure her of, "that the prosperity of Spain was the humiliation of France, and that the troubles of France were the exaltation of Lorraine!"

Queen Catherine, therefore, set forth, and, attended by her train of beautiful women, met "*son fils égaré*," as she termed Monsieur, at the abbey of Beaulieu, near to Loches, in Touraine. The duke arrived, accompanied by Condé, the palatine Casimir, and a staff of all the principal officers of the confederated army. The first

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interview passed in greetings, compliments, and congratulations. Monsieur and his sister tenderly embraced, and conferred apart, when the duke offered to include any stipulations, pecuniary or otherwise, in the approaching treaty, which Marguerite might suggest or deem to her advantage. The shrewd wit of the queen of Navarre induced her to decline this proposal, although not a livre of her dowry as a daughter of France had been paid. Marguerite understood the sentiments and mental reservations of queen Catherine in offering to the malcontents peace on their own terms; and she comprehended that to be included in such a treaty would subject her just claims to the fate of that convention. The following four days were spent in conferences at which Catherine presided; her majesty also discussing the treaty privately with each chieftain of note. The articles formerly presented by the deputies in Paris soon after Henry's accession were at length accepted in the name of king Henry, including the stipulated disclaimer of connivance in the massacre of Paris sought from his majesty. The appanage of the duc d'Alençon was augmented by the gift of the duchies of Berry, Touraine, and Anjou, with the right of appointing to all civil posts and ecclesiastical benefices. The yearly revenue of the duke by these additions was raised to the sum of 400,000 gold crowns;[1] the king, moreover, volunteered, in his royal generosity, to present Monsieur with an additional 100,000 crowns, and granted the latter permission to assume the title of duc d'Anjou. The prince de Condé was gratified by the government of Picardy; and the town of Péronne, of fatal nomenclature, was assigned to him as his residence, until he could be placed in authority over the province; as resistance was anticipated to the rule of a Huguenot

[1] One hundred and twenty thousand pounds sterling; an enormous revenue, considering the relative value of money in those days.

prince in that territory, a stronghold of Catholicism. The duc de Damville was conciliated by the confirmation of his government of Languedoc, which, though an office always conferred for the life of its occupant, the marshal had forfeited by his recent treasonable league; and by the registration of the decree proclaiming the innocence of the maréchal de Montmorency of crimes and designs subversive of the monarchy.[1] The towns of Beaucaire and Aigues-Mortes in Languedoc, of Périgueux and Le Mas-de-Verdun in Guyenne, of Nions and Serres in Dauphiny, Issoire in Auvergne, and Tour in Provence, were ceded to the confederates, in addition to the places already acquired by the recent concession of territory in governments and appanages to the princes.[2] The most arduous part of the treaty was to find funds in order to satisfy the pecuniary claims of prince Casimir, which amounted to the sum of four millions of crowns. Catherine solved this difficulty by persuading the palatine, after several private interviews, to wave his present claims by accepting the principality of Château-Thierry, with a pension of 14,000 crowns, the payment of 700,000 crowns, and the donation of several valuable jewels in pledge for the future payment of the remainder of the debt. The estates belonging to the house of Châlons, including the town of Orange in Provence, were to be restituted to the prince of Orange.[3] Finally, the king plighted his royal word to assemble the States-general within a period of six months from the proclamation of the treaty.

The Huguenots at length thus obtained, *on parch-*

[1] De Thou. Bouillon. Cheverny. Davila. Duploix. L'Etoile.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henri de Nassau married the sister and heiress of Philibert de Châlons, prince of Orange, during the reign of Francis I. The prince died while under attainder for rebellion.

ment, the concession of all they had fought for. In a financial point of view Catherine had lavished millions of treasure, when not a tenth portion of the sums which she had so assigned were to be found in the exchequer of the state. She had ceded to the confederates provinces and towns which she knew would resist, and refuse obedience to Huguenot rule. Again, the assemblage of the States so clamorously demanded by the princes, and which before the signature of the treaty had been reluctantly contemplated by the king, Catherine now welcomed as the weapon by which she might sever the knot so deliberately tied. The States, she believed, would repudiate the treaty of Beaulieu; and as an act consistent with such protest, furnish funds for the resumption of the war. The duc d'Alençon and Condé, who were novices in the art of *chicane* in comparison with the subtle Catherine, to her majesty's intense delight, insisted pertinaciously on the concession of this point, which three months later they would have given much to abrogate. It was, however, conceded with much parade and pretended reluctance by the queen.

The greatest consternation prevailed at court when Catherine's pecuniary liberality became known. As for the king, his dismay was extreme, knowing that the coffers of the state were empty, and that he had money scarcely sufficient for what his majesty chose to term "*les frais de ses menus plaisirs.*" At length a notable scheme was concocted between the king, Villequier, and St. Luc, another *mignon,* just about this period rising into importance. Accordingly about ten days after the departure of Catherine for Beaulieu, Henry sent a summons to the presidents of the parliament, and the officers of la Chambre des Comptes, and other chief functionaries of state, to meet him in the hall of the Louvre. When these personages had as-

sembled, the king made a speech, in which he stated his pecuniary difficulties, commenting bitterly on the past refusals of the high court and municipality of Paris to mulct the inhabitants to defray the expenses of the war. The king terminated his oration by demanding a private loan from each personage present. The president de Thou, after a momentary hesitation, stepped forward and offered the king 5,000 livres: the other presidents and officers followed the example of that illustrious magistrate. The king thanked and dismissed his loyal senators. The following day these personages met together at the Palais to arrange the conditions of the loan which each had engaged to furnish. To the surprise and disgust of all concerned, however, a few days subsequently the minister of finance, Pother, despatched a treasury mandate calling authoritatively upon each contributor to the loan to bring his quota to the royal coffers within a stipulated period. By this expedient Henry raised a sum of 100,000 livres; and again nearly double that sum by making the same humiliating application to the principal merchants, notaries, and factors of his capital. It was also resolved, in the council of state, to despatch Gondy, bishop of Paris, to Rome, to petition the pope to grant a bull enabling the king to apply to the public service the annual 200,000 livres paid by the state to the clergy of the realm in compensation for certain ecclesiastical alienations effected during preceding reigns.

The proclamation of peace was made on the 14th day of May, 1576, the king proceeding in state to notify the same to the assembled chambers. The concessions made to the Huguenots, and the vast sums of money distributed, so incensed the public, that in the capital, and in many of the principal towns, the heralds were received with hissing and throwing of stones. The people of Paris, moreover, refused to

permit bonfires to be lighted; and smashed the windows of any who, in obedience to the royal order, attempted an illumination. The placards announcing the peace, and the copies of the treaty signed at Beaulieu and posted in the public squares, were torn to shreds. When the king quitted the Chambers he desired to proceed to the celebration of a Te Deum in Notre Dame; but the exasperation of the Parisians caused the ceremony to be deferred until the following day. This being accordingly done, not one individual of the chapter of Notre Dame was then to be prevailed upon to officiate at the thanksgiving—canons, chaplains, and choristers, one and all, refused to sing a Te Deum for the dishonour done, as they averred, to the holy Roman faith. The clergy and choir of the royal chapel in the Louvre, therefore, were directed to intone the Te Deum, at which no personages of note assisted, excepting the public bodies present by mandate or state-precedent, and the nobles and ladies in the suite of the king and queen.[1] "All the chieftains of the Catholic party," says de Thou, "made ceaseless agitation and protests against the disastrous precipitation of the queen-mother, who, actuated by an unhappy eagerness to recall the prince her son, concluded a shameful and unjust peace, as ruinous as could be to the religion and prosperity of the orthodox." A fortnight scarcely elapsed after the signature of the treaty of Beaulieu before an attempt was made to give organization to popular discontent. Two persons of the name of la Bruyère, perfumers in the capital, heralded that monstrous confederation afterwards termed La Ligue. A paper was secretly circulated by these persons for the signature of the orthodox, by which they bound themselves to maintain the Catholic faith and the supremacy of the church. The stern censures of the president de Thou, on learning

[1] L'Etoile: Journal de Henri III. La Popelinière. De Thou, liv. lxi.

this expedient, and his observations on the danger of establishing such a precedent, had the effect of arresting for a time this movement in the capital. In the provinces, however, its promoters, chiefly at first persons of the middle classes, had more success in the development of their design. The idea was not novel; the model had been furnished by the convention of Péronne, A.D. 1558, concluded between the cardinal de Lorraine and Francis duc de Guise and their adherents with Philip II. of Spain—Christine duchess-dowager of Lorraine being the negotiator of this league, and the dukes of Ferrara and Savoy its first foreign allies. This primary league had been negotiated to check the progress of the Reformation in France, independently, if requisite, of the authority and power of the king; and to procure the re-enactment of the edict of Châteaubriand promulgated by Henry II. on his accession, and subsequently repealed. The treasonable correspondence of the princes of Lorraine with Spain had complicated and prolonged the civil wars: the Spanish envoys, then all powerful in most European courts, had been rather accredited to the duc de Guise and his brother the cardinal than to the sovereign of France. Numerous offshoots of this league had developed themselves in the provinces, to the great misery of the inhabitants. Thus in Languedoc a league was formed between the cardinals Strozzi and d'Armagnac; in Guyenne one flourished, of which the marquis de Trans was general. After the massacre of Paris the ardour of the orthodox for La Sainte Union declined; they vainly hoped that reform had received a fatal blow; and priests and prelates rejoiced, and thenceforth deemed themselves, their riches and sinecures, secure from the prying comments and bolder censure of their apostate children.

But eventually the misgovernment of the queen, her duplicity and reckless devotion for her son Henry, and

the encroachments of her Italian *protégés*, gave rise to a third party—that of Les Politiques. The junction of this faction with the remnant of the old Huguenot Confederation enabled the principle of reform once more to develope itself, backed by the *prestige* of the greatest names of the realm and by a standing army. Concessions thereupon, it was averred, the most disastrous, had been made at Beaulieu: the Huguenots, as a body, had obtained recognition in the state; soon their power, it was apprehended, would be such as to enable them to insist upon the convocation of a national council to reform the polity of the Gallican church—that ancient bugbear of Rome and Spain. Catherine by a single stroke of the pen at Beaulieu had apparently relinquished the policy of the preceding reigns, and made at last, ignoble concession to the heterodox. The people remembered how on a similar emergency, during the early years of Charles IX., a great chieftain had risen to defend the cause of the church, abandoned, as now, by the state; and naturally they looked for some guiding indication from the son of that Catholic prince, himself also a chieftain of repute. But the duc de Guise gave as yet no sign of sympathy: at his beautiful château of Nanteuil he was maturing his plans away from the temporizing policy of the queen—which would have committed him—the coldness of the king, and the insolent assumptions of his majesty's privileged chamberlains.

In the province of Picardy, and especially in the town of Péronne, the most strenuous opposition was made to the reception of Condé as the king's lieutenant. Jacques seigneur d'Humières, governor of Péronne, Roye, and Montdidier, a noble amongst the chiefest of the province, was the first provincial organizer of the League—his object being to defend the church by opposing the entrance of Condé. In Péronne, therefore, the birthplace of the League, the League again

sprang into vitality. The seigneur d'Humières bore mortal hatred to the Montmorency on account of a process recently decided in favour of M. de Thoré, and which had placed the latter in possession of the barony and estates of Humières.[1] The emissaries of d'Humières, therefore, headed by a young cavalier of the name of Haplincourt, made a progress throughout the province of Picardy, and visited from house to house throughout the town of Péronne to procure signatures to the league, or La Sainte Union. The inhabitants of Péronne, to a man, signed the compact and took oath of fidelity. The authorities thereupon declined to receive Condé, and elected M. de Haplincourt as commandant of Péronne with the sanction of M. d'Humières, who meantime busily occupied himself in extending the action of the confederation. The formula of the union was drawn in the name of the Holy Trinity: its members swore to live and die faithful members of the League organized for the re-establishment of the Holy Roman Catholic Faith, abjuring and repudiating all other tenets; to defend the king from all conspiracies, and to render him the obedience that subjects owed to their prince, the limits of such obedience to be defined by the approaching States-general. Such were the broad principles advertised by the League: its venom, however, was displayed in the subsidiary articles, which every member was required to subscribe upon oath. No compact could be

[1] M. de Thoré espoused Eléonore d'Humières, heiress of the house. Madame de Thoré died suddenly of horror, after witnessing the execution of Poltrot for the murder of the duc de Guise, leaving a daughter who survived her mother a few months only. Thoré, therefore, claimed the great heritage appertaining to his deceased wife in virtue of her contract of marriage; a claim opposed by the uncle of the deceased lady, who claimed her estates as male heir and representative of her house. The parliament of Paris had decided the claim in favour of M. de Thoré. De Thou, liv. lxiii.

more specious and subversive of royal power; no code has ever surpassed it in subtilty, or has been concerted with greater subtilty so as to gain empire over the actions and consciences of its members, excepting, perhaps, the Jesuit Constitutions, to which it bears a striking similarity. The articles stipulated that each individual must sacredly engage to devote to the accomplishment of the designs of the League their lives and property; also to defend the Union from conspiracies and enterprises calculated to overthrow it. If any member received hurt or injury from any one, however highly placed such aggressor might be, the confederation undertook to avenge such injury, either by means of the ordinary courts or by resort to arms. "Should any of the members—by a misfortune, which Heaven ought daily to be invoked to avert—break his engagements, he shall be punished with the utmost rigour as a traitor in the sight of the Most High, without harm or retaliation being suffered to fall on the appointed minister of such holy vengeance." That a chieftain should be elected to whom the members were to swear fealty and implicit obedience. If any member neglected his duties, or showed repugnance to obey mandates addressed to him, the chief of the League was alone competent to decide his fate, and to ordain, without appeal whatever, the penalty such culprit was to suffer. That all towns, villages, and hamlets throughout the world should be invited to join the confederation; and that each member, on subscribing the League, was to bind himself to furnish as far as lay in his power men, money, and arms. That whoever refused to join the League was to be regarded as a public enemy; and that the mandate of the chief was to be deemed sufficient to authorize any enterprise against opponents of the Holy League; and that the said chief became sole judge of the life of the delinquent and of the disposal of his pro-

perty, without the intervention of any judge whatever appointed by the state. Finally, all members were to swear on the Holy Gospels to keep and to maintain these articles inviolate.[1] Such were the conventions of the terrible League: they daringly superseded the royal authority, and transferred to the elected chief the prerogatives of the crown. The power of life or death; obedience, irrespective of other authority whatever; the claim of disposing at pleasure of the wealth and influence of its members, and of directing political bias and action, were monstrous and fatal usurpations of the kingly office. The resolution of the citizens of Péronne not to admit Condé was viewed with secret complacency by Henry; though he was perfectly aware of the combination organized to thwart one of the clauses of that treaty which he, as supreme ruler, had recently accepted. Even the queen, gratified at perceiving that her hidden designs, while signing the compact of Beaulieu, promised speedily to be realized, failed with her usual astute sagacity to detect the dangerous element threatening the very existence of royal power. She, therefore, opened a parley with Condé,[2] and with many courteous regrets again requested the prince to accept, in lieu of Péronne, the two southern towns of St. Jean d'Angely and Cognac

[1] Mém. de la Ligue. Édition de l'abbé Goujet, tome i. Cayet: Chronologie Novenaire. Mém. de Nevers, tome i. pp. 627-8, et seq. Davila.

[2] The queen wrote a most fair sounding, and plausible letter to Condé (MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Colbert, vol. xxix.); in which, after advertizing the prince of the condemnation to death by the parliament of one Abraham, an adherent, she adds: "As for the rest, mon cousin, I tell you frankly that, when you choose to act upon the counsel which I have always offered to you—*i. e.* to refuse your confidence to the people round you, and to return into righteous paths and render to the king the allegiance which you owe him—it is my belief that you will live in a much happier condition than you now do. I entreat you again to reflect well, and to select the career worthy of you, and suitable to your birth and to your nearness of kin to this royal crown."

—places which had always, with but short intervals, been garrisoned by the Huguenots. Condé, who throughout the negotiations had maintained an aspect of sombre discontent, sullenly assented. The duc d'Alençon, who, on the contrary, seemed joyful and satisfied, pressed the prince to take refuge with him in Bourges, the capital of his new appanage of Berry, where on quitting the camp of duke Casimir he had been magnificently received. "No, monseigneur," tartly responded Condé, "my presence would mar your joy. Moreover, amongst the throng of your new adherents, there might possibly be found one whose pleasure might consist in sending a ball through my head. This said rascal would, no doubt, be hanged by your highness; but Condé, nevertheless, would be dead! I have no desire, monseigneur, that you should hang rascals on my account."[1] Condé, therefore, at the head of fifty horse, proceeded to La Rochelle, after first despatching a gentleman, the sieur de Montaigu, to Paris to protest against the imperfect ratification of the treaty, as regarded his own interests. After a short sojourn at La Rochelle, where he was joined by the king of Navarre, Condé proceeded to St. Jean d'Angely.

The army of Casimir, during these transactions, retreated from Bourbonnois to the frontiers of Burgundy; where it encamped pending the performance of the engagements contracted by the queen at Beaulieu. The palatine sent an envoy to the king, complaining of the unsatisfactory treatment experienced by his late allies; who all, with the exception of Monsieur, deemed themselves aggrieved and betrayed by the delay in the execution of the treaty. Henry despatched Bellièvre to treat with Casimir. His majesty notified his willingness to execute what he had promised; but insisted that time must be allowed to overcome the prejudices

[1] Journal de Henri III.

of the French, who, as in the case of the inhabitants of Péronne, had refused obedience to the royal mandate. The argument which, however, the palatine deemed to be most conclusive of his majesty's pacific intents, was the payment of the sums promised to himself; while Bellièvre presented him with jewels of immense value, the property of queen Catherine, as security for the remainder. The two noblemen nominated as hostages for his majesty's eventual payment of the debt, also arrived in camp. Thus personally satisfied, Casimir struck his flag, and, at the head of his levies, returned to Heidelberg.

The king was now free from the immediate calamity of civil war. The realm was delivered from foreign invaders—the princes had laid down arms. The price of Catherine's astute intrigues, however, was the renewal of an intestine league of vast dimensions—the disaffection of the clergy—the still more complete impoverishment of the finances—and the formal refusal of the governors of three important cities to obey the royal commands.

After the return of Catherine to Paris, the king and queen departed to make a brief progress through Normandy. The parliament of Rouen, it was hoped, might show itself more accessible, when requested to aid in replenishing the royal exchequer. Henry was accompanied by the cardinal de Bourbon, archbishop of Rouen; and by Villequier, St. Luc, d'O., and Quélus; besides a suite of the senior officers of his household. The royal pair proceeded to Rouen, where Henry made but a brief sojourn. The only incident which diversified the king's residence there was an outburst of ill-timed zeal on the part of the cardinal de Bourbon. The prelate, hearing that the Huguenots were assembled at worship, conformably to the permission given them under the recent treaty, proceeded in full pontificals, attended by the chapter of his cathedral, to the place where the *prêche* was holden. There, commanding the preacher to

leave the tribune, the cardinal himself ascended, and addressed the assemblage in terms more vigorous than courtly. Such at length became the excitement of the prelate, and so menacing his denunciations, that the people, fearing it might be the preliminary *tirade* to an onslaught, took to flight in the greatest confusion.[1] Some one boasted, in the presence of Henry, of the cardinal's exploit, and of the power of the "scourge of the cross." "Ah!" carelessly responded his majesty, "*je voudrois qu'on pût aussi facilement chasser les autres (hérétiques) du royaume, y dût-on ajouster le bénistier!*" From Rouen Henry proceeded to Dieppe, where he made a large purchase of little dogs, parrots, and apes, the dealers in which having received a notification to meet the royal pair at this port. The king's sojourn lasted only three days; he then returned to Paris, the excursion altogether not extending beyond a fortnight's absence. Paris, meanwhile, rung with satirical allusions to Henry and his favourites of both sexes. On his majesty's return from Normandy he found the following placard posted almost in every street, enumerating the titles which Henry had alone the right to assume, the rest, according to the wit, being "moonshine:"—

"Henri, par la grâce de sa mère inerte roi de France et de Pologne imaginaire, concierge du Louvre, marguillier de St. Germain l'Auxerrois, basteleur des églises de Paris, gendre de Colas, gauderonneur des colets de sa femme, friseur de ses cheveux, mercier du Palais, visiteur des étuves, gardien des quatres mendians, père-conscript des Blanc Battus, et protecteur des Capuchins."

Fresh pasquinades were issued when, a fortnight after his return, Henry again appeared barefooted in the

[1] La sainte et tres-chrétienne Résolution de M. le Cardinal de Bourbon pour maintenir l'Eglise Catholique et Romaine, par Jacques Berson. Archives Curieuses, tome xi.

streets of Paris, "holding in his hand a rosary of large beads, and mumbling his avés." This exhibition of devotion the king, it was popularly believed, made at the suggestion of the queen his mother, to revive belief in his allegiance to the church, which had been somewhat shaken by his majesty's acquiescence in the treaty of Beaulieu. The Parisians, however, perversely attributed Henry's zeal to a desire to extract money; and, consequently, the following verses were circulated over Paris, and were pasted during the night on the gates of the Louvre:—

Le roy pour avoir de l'argent
A fait le pauvre, l'indigent,
Et l'hypocrite;
Le grand pardon il a gagné!
Au pain, à l'eau, il a jeuné
Comme un hermite.
Mais Paris, qui le connoist bien
Ne voudra plus lui prêter rien
A sa requête;
Car il en a jà tant presté
Qu'il a de lui dire arrêté,
Allez en quête!

The king, feeling extremely incensed at the insolence of his subjects of Paris, departed thence for Olinville, after first issuing an edict, August 16, 1576, convening the States-general to meet at Blois at the end of the month of November. Queen Catherine remained in Paris with her daughter Marguerite, who manifested great indignation that she had not been permitted to rejoin the king her husband, in accordance with a demand recently made by the sieur de Duras, a special envoy sent by the king of Navarre to escort his consort to Nérac. The queen of Navarre, however, found consolation in the splendour of the entertainments by which her mother sought to soothe and divert the disaffection of the Parisians. "To keep the French nobles in good

humour," said the wily Catherine in her famous epistle of counsel addressed to Charles IX., "it is requisite to have a ball twice a week, that they may live in peace and be loyal, besides other sports; for the French are of such vivacious temperament, that, unless you afford them occupation, they are certain to apply themselves to mischievous and dangerous enterprises." Catherine, at this period, received Don Juan of Austria, illegitimate son of the late emperor Charles V., and entertained him magnificently at the Tuileries. Don Juan had been invested by his brother Philip II. with the command in the Low Countries, whither he was proceeding. In passing through Champagne, the prince visited the duc de Guise at Joinville. Secret and important conferences had there been holden between Don Juan and the duke, relative to the political and religious affairs of the realm of France. It is even conjectured that they discussed the ambitious designs which the subsequent conduct of each unfolded—the duc de Guise in his attempts to supersede the royal line of Bourbon on the throne of France, as the lineal descendant of Charlemagne—Don Juan to obtain the Low Countries in independent sovereignty—or even, as it has been surmised, to dethrone Philip II., aided by the armies of Elizabeth of England.[1] The details of the League, as far as then developed, were canvassed by the princes at Joinville; and fresh measures concerted to crush the Protestant faction of France, and that in the Netherlands, headed by the house of Nassau, which Don Juan was about to assail. They, moreover, agreed upon a cypher to be used as the medium of their future correspondence. The key of this cypher being afterwards discovered amongst the papers of Don Juan at his decease, was sent to Philip II., with all the

[1] Le Laboureur: Addit. aux Mém. de Castelnau, tome ii. De Thou. Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III.

documents found emanating from the pen of Guise. By this means the king of Spain, by holding in his possession the secret of the most daring designs ever conceived by subject, subsequently compelled the duke to act in some measure in accord with them, to serve the political purposes of Spain, by the threat of disclosing all to Henry III., when Guise showed inclination to moderate his ambitious aspirings. After his visit at Joinville, Don Juan proceeded to Paris, where he received cordial greeting from queen Catherine, to whom he brought letters from Philip II., and from her two granddaughters the infantas Isabel and Catalina. The beauty of the queen of Navarre made a deep impression on Don Juan. He danced several times with Marguerite, and appeared to take infinite delight in her conversation. After the conclusion of the ball, Don Juan, nevertheless, remarked, in lofty Castilian, "that, although the beauty of the queen partook rather of the divine than the human, yet that such attractions were more calculated to ruin men than to save them!"[1]

King Henry and his consort, during this interval, were sojourning at Olinville, a castle and domain in the neighbourhood of the town of Chartres, which the king, despite his poverty, had recently purchased to present to queen Louise. The king expended 60,000 francs for its acquisition, and an additional 100,000 francs in furniture and decorations; to superintend the latter being the reason of Henry's sojourn at Olinville. He was attended only by Villequier, d'O., Quélus, and St. Luc; and the queen by one lady of honour, madame de Dampierre.

During Henry's sojourn at Olinville, Monsieur came from Bourges to visit his brother, vanquished by Catherine's reiterated entreaties that he would become personally reconciled to the king before the meeting of

[1] Brantôme: Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

the States. Henry received his brother with the utmost coldness, and told Monsieur that he was aware his submission was made only in deference to his pecuniary interests and to the prayers of the queen their mother. The duc d'Anjou—as Monsieur was now termed—resented extremely the conduct of the king, and made bitter complaints in a letter addressed to the secretary-of-state Villeroy;[1] he also wrote angrily to the queen-mother, after his first interview with Henry. Henry could not certainly be expected to greet with paternal affection a brother, who had thrice perfidiously plotted his overthrow, and whose flippant jests had greatly contributed to entail obloquy on the royal person. The wholesome effect of Henry's severe reception of his brother was, however, dissipated when, two days afterwards, the king was advised to announce the fact of their personal reconciliation as an event to be greatly thankful for, by letters-patent addressed to the municipalities of the realm. Monsieur made a sojourn of two days at Olinville; and then proceeded to Paris to escort queen Catherine *et sa sœur bien-aimée* Marguerite to Blois, where the deputies were already assembling.

This important assembly was regarded with feelings of the deepest anxiety by both parties in the state. The Huguenots, satisfied with the terms they had extorted by the last edict of Pacification, would fain have prorogued the assembly; for it was to be feared lest the discussions might have the effect of annulling privileges obtained at the cost of nearly a quarter of a century of warfare. The king of Navarre, and especially la Noue, Turenne, and Thoré, understood how thoroughly they had been abandoned by the duc d'Anjou, and by the lords of the Catholic faction of Les Politiques, his adherents. When the stipulation respecting the States-

[1] Mém. du Duc de Nevers, tome i. p. 148. The interview commenced on the 6th day of November, 1576.

general had been inserted in the convention of Beaulieu, the two parties were far from having anticipated so abrupt and complete a severance. The purely Protestant party, therefore, in the approaching States was likely to form a small minority. Never before had the Huguenots felt how cruel a blow had been struck by the massacre of Paris and its preceding catastrophes. The eloquence and diplomacy of Coligny, the zeal of Montgomery, the wealth of la Rochefoucauld, the penetrating intellect of Jeanne d'Albret, the valiant arm of Montemart,—all now were lost to their brethren in faith and in arms. Queen Catherine, as she watched with eager attention the election of the deputies throughout each province, beheld with mingled satisfaction and dismay the repugnance of the people to the concessions she had made at Beaulieu; and the consequent prevalence of the principles of the League, which, under the duc de la Trimouille, had now spread its noxious ramifications throughout Poitou and the adjacent districts. Nevertheless, Catherine trusted that her own diplomacy would prove still more subtle. The king viewed the pending assemblage with sentiments of the utmost complacency and indifference. Under the sanction of the representatives of the people, Henry hoped to obtain the abrogation of the treaty he had been compelled to sign, and the replenishment of his finances. These two ideas dominated over the mind of his majesty.

On the sixth day of December, 1576, the States were opened. The deputies assembled in the great hall of the castle of Blois. A superb platform of state had been erected at the upper end, upon which stood the throne. Henry took his seat thereon attired in the most elaborate style. On his right hand sat queen Catherine; and below her majesty the cardinal de Bourbon, the two brothers of Condé, the duc de Montpensier, his son the prince-dauphin of Auvergne, the

duc de Mercœur, brother of queen Louise, and the duc de Mayenne. The duc de Guise had excused himself from being present at the opening of the States—an absence which was considered inauspicious by the majority of deputies. On the left of the king sat his consort queen Louise and the queen of Navarre, the duchesses de Nevers[1] and de Nemours,[2] and the bishops of Langres, Laon, and Beauvais. Behind Louise stood the duchesses de Retz and d'Usez and madame de Dampierre; and near them, in a group on the right of the throne, the chamberlains of the king, whose fantastical attire was afterwards commented upon with wonder and disgust. Henry rose and addressed the assembly at great length;[3] he touched upon the miseries of the kingdom, and the want of respect and sympathy shown towards himself personally, with pathos and eloquence. A majesty of demeanour, from which not even his frivolity could detract, and a ready fluency of words were Henry's chiefest endowments. Had the actions of the king coincided with the justice and patriotism of his sentiments, doubtless few reigns would have been more prosperous than his own. "Our vices," said his majesty, "lie at the root of our miseries; they have poisoned all classes of the community, so that I no longer behold that attachment to the faith, and that love and veneration for the person of the king which formerly were so admirable.—No! scarcely a vestige remains. Therefore, I deplore my sad lot and destiny, and look back with envy to the happy and glorious reigns of the kings my father and grandfather. Often," continued his majesty, "have I made my prayer to the

[1] Henriette de Clèves, whose mother was Marguerite de Bourbon, sister of Antoine, king of Navarre.

[2] Anne d'Esté, daughter of Rénée de France, duchesse de Ferrara, and granddaughter of Louis XII., mother of the duc de Guise.

[3] "Le roy après avoir levé son bonnet à l'honneur de l'assemblée luy tint ces propos de grâce et action fort belle," says the duc de Nevers.

Most High that the tomb might close over me, rather than that I should witness the calamities which harassed the reigns of my deceased brothers."[1] Henry continued to exhort his subjects to peace—a peace holy as well as advantageous; to banish dissensions and to unite heartily nobles, prelates, and commons to relieve the necessities of the realm; to put down leagues and confederations; to reform morals; and to restore to the laws their ancient vigour. These exhortations were applauded; but they lost their force, and belief in the sincerity of the king's sorrowful reminiscences vanished, as the deputies surveyed the bedizened and foppish figure of their monarch—a king, as it seemed, in masquerade.

The following day the States commenced their debatings by carrying a proposition moved by the Tiers Etat "that the king should be petitioned to nominate a certain number of capable personages, the which, in conjunction with a deputy from each province of the realm, should be empowered to consider and finally resolve the general and special questions debated by the States; the said States reserving to themselves the liberty of challenging such individuals nominated by the king; the decisions approved by the personages so nominated to be held inviolable and as fundamental laws." The king dryly refused the petition, which would have abrogated the functions of the council of state. At a subsequent period, however, Henry showed himself well inclined to sanction the measure, it having been shown to him by Espinac archbishop of Lyons that it would be no difficult matter to gain over the chosen members of this council; for that twelve men were more easily influenced than the assembled States. The deputy Bodin,[2] however, in the name of the Tiers Etat, then

[1] De Thou, liv. lxiii.

[2] Ibid. "Bodin," says the historian, "était un homme fort docte, grand jurisconsulte, et bien éloquent."

protested against the measure as pernicious and corrupt; perceiving, as he then did, that the sentiments of the majority of deputies coincided with the views of his own party, that of the League. The day following his majesty's rejection of the first proposition, the States unanimously petitioned the king to declare lawful and valid all that the assembly might decree by acclamation. This petition Henry rejected, angrily saying, "that he could not subscribe to the request, not knowing what propositions might be brought to him." On the 15th of December, eight days after their assemblage, the question of religious toleration was discussed. The three orders unanimously resolved, "that for the future one religion should be alone tolerated throughout the realm—the Catholic, apostolic, and Roman."[1]

This resolution was satisfactory to the king in the abstract, but he dreaded its precipitancy; being by no means prepared for the immediate renewal of the war. He accordingly contrived that the assembly should agree to despatch the duc de Montpensier to the king of Navarre and to the duc de Damville, to invite them to join the session, or show cause for protest. The king, nevertheless, to satisfy the zeal of the deputies, publicly intimated his approval of the proscription of the Huguenot faith; and in the presence of the queen-mother and Monsieur he commended the principles of the "Association," as the League was primarily termed. The most violent upholders of the "Association" were Cheverny, the duc de Nevers, and the duc de Mayenne. Catherine also declared that she approved of the principle of non-toleration of the reformed creed, but stated that she would never assent to a renewal of the war. Such was the menacing aspect of affairs and the violence of

[1] Journal de Nevers—tenu à Blois, Samedi, 15 de Décembre. Couriers were despatched to the king of Navarre, to Condé, and to the pope, to intimate this resolution; also to the town of La Charité.

the deputies during the first fortnight of the session of the States of 1576, that its Protestant members threatened to withdraw; and war broke out again in the south, where Turenne and the king of Navarre captured several small towns. The majority of the deputies had already signed the League, or were prepared to do so; and, moreover, to exact a pledge from the king that he would annul every edict favourable to reform. Henry hesitated. He feared the objurgations of Catherine, who, while declaring for the Association, feigned to repudiate the notion of a renewal of hostilities; he dreaded the pressure of the Catholic peers of the privy council; he doubted the duc d'Anjou; he distrusted the princes of Guise, and that apparently disinterested policy which kept their chieftain at Joinville. Finally, his majesty not having a *sou* in his coffer, naturally desired that the question of finance should precede that of war. An incident occurred, meanwhile, which keenly aroused the apprehensions of the king. A certain advocate named David, a devoted adherent of the house of Guise, died about this period. Amongst his papers was found a memorial addressed to the pope, for the reformation of the realm of France and the destruction of heresy; a copy of which, it was stated, had been deposited in the hands of the cardinal de Pellve, and purported to be an *exposé* of the enlightened designs of the house of Lorraine for the support of the true faith. This memorial fell by chance into the hands of certain Protestants, who made it public,[1] and circulated copies amongst the deputies at Blois. The pamphlet commenced by a genealogy comparing the descent of the princes of Capet

[1] The title of the pamphlet was "Summa Legationis Guisianæ ad Pontificem Maximum, deprehensa nuper inter Chartas Joannis Davidi, Parisiensis, Advocati, et Gallico in Latinum conversa:" Printed in Mémoires de la Ligue, Edit. Goujet, tome i. Also in a voluminous pamphlet entitled "Scripta utriusque Partis, Frankfort, 1586."

and Lorraine, showing the latter to be the true descendants of Charlemagne, and therefore entitled to claim the triple *fleur-de-lis*. The writer then proceeded to prove his assertion; and showed, by appealing to the misfortunes of the Valois, their early deaths, broken constitutions, military reverses, profligacy, and lukewarm faith, that the curse of the Omnipotent rested on their usurpation of the sceptre. He stated that their lineage was all but extinct; that a feeble king and a profligate heir-presumptive, both childless, and likely to remain so, alone stood between the throne and a heretic successor. A scheme of startling boldness was then sketched to neutralize such disasters. It was proposed to compel the king to acknowledge the duc de Guise as chief of La Sainte Ligue, with unlimited and irresponsible powers. That the ancient right possessed by the States-general over the life and prerogative of the sovereign should be re-asserted. That the canons of Trent should be enforced, and a public profession of faith made by every deputy of the realm. The duc de Guise was then to march and exterminate the Huguenots, reinforced by aids from all the corporate bodies of the realm, the nobles, clergy, Tiers Etat, the benediction of his Holiness, and the *bienveillance* of Spain. That on the termination of the victorious campaign the duke should cause the arrest of Monsieur, and his arraignment and condemnation, for his late revolt. That the king should finally be relegated to a monastery, and the crown again placed on the sacred brow of the representative of Charlemagne.[1] The duc de Guise and his brothers vehemently denied knowledge of the writer, or participation in his designs; and in proof of his sincerity Guise arrived at Blois. Nevertheless, the conspiracy suggested by the advocate David was, with

[1] Davila: Hist. de Guerres Civiles, tome ii. De Thou, liv. lxiii. Mémoires de la Ligue, tome i.

a slight variation, the subsequent design adopted by the League; and if in reality the memorial was only a political *ruse*, concerted to rouse Henry from his lethargy, it was one singularly prophetical. The king perused the pamphlet, and seemed inclined to reject it as a forgery, when, to his consternation, the ambassador in Madrid[1] sent his royal master a *fac-simile*, stating that the memorial had been secretly forwarded to the king of Spain by agents in Rome. It now behoved Henry to show himself worthy of his crown and name by authoritatively suppressing the League; by declaring the signature of its clauses to be penal; and by calling upon the princes of Guise publicly to disavow and condemn its diffusion. Such a course might have occasioned a renewal of the war; but never had Henry a more favourable opportunity for subduing this especial faction. The duc de Montpensier at this period would have stood by his sovereign; the princes of Lorraine, unprepared, and not, as subsequently, reinforced by foreign influence, must have obeyed the mandate of the sovereign. The chieftains in revolt—Damville, the king of Navarre, and Condé—offered to join the king in a crusade against the Leaguers. The reiters of duke Casimir were still banded; while the people, astonished at the unusual energy of their sovereign, had he so acted, would probably have cordially defended the crown. The temporizing policy of queen Catherine unhappily intervened. Morvilliers, keeper of the seal, seconded her majesty's arguments, and represented that to condemn as treasonable that League which the great majority of deputies had signed and clamorously upheld, was a hazardous proceeding, and one which might thoroughly subvert the royal power and *prestige*. It were therefore better, they pleaded, that the king should himself become nominal chief of the League for the defence of the

[1] This ambassador was Jean de Vivonne, sieur de Saint-Goart.

faith, and direct from the royal cabinet the machinations deemed to be so pernicious. The favourite theory of the king and his mother—the rivalry of parties and absolute government—forbad the extinction of either of the three factions. The king, therefore, at length resolved to sign the League, and to enforce its acceptance on all his Catholic subjects holding offices under the crown. To diminish the influence of the Lorraine princes, an *ordonnance* was further issued forbidding any person to ask a favour from the king excepting for himself, his majesty intending for the future to be the sole channel of grace. This mandate created a crowd of malcontents; the adherents of the princes, furious that their patrons had no longer power to realize their promises, vehemently espoused the League. Morvilliers, being indiscreet enough, after the promulgation of the mandate, to ask for the reversion of the bishopric of Orléans for his nephew, met with a decided refusal from his majesty; it was supposed, however, that his request had been made at the suggestion of Henry, who desired to give positive proof of the inflexibility of his resolve in this matter. The utmost division, meanwhile, existed between the king, the queen, and their counsellors; disputes were of daily occurrence, and Henry's peevish petulance, when opposed by the stronger will and more wily calculations of his mother, gave rise to many indecorous scenes. The principal occupation of Villequier, during the session of the States, seems to have been in mediating between Henry, his mother, and brother. The most violent harangues continued to be made by the States; the zeal of the majority of deputies often rendering them oblivious of the respect owing to the king: while a few members maintained that his majesty's religion was orthodox, and that before the assembling of the States he had privately resolved to accept the League. The duc de Nevers maintains this view of the king's

intention; and in his "Journal des Etats" intimates that the apprehension conceived by Henry at the suspicious apathy displayed by the duc de Guise had determined him to supersede the latter as chief of the pending League. Fresh envoys were sent to the king of Navarre, Condé, Damville, to the queen of England, and to duke Casimir, notifying the firm resolve of the legislature to tolerate only one religion in the realm.[1]

In the interval the king of Navarre and Condé published a declaration protesting against the decision of the States, and refusing to acknowledge the legality of the assembly. Damville received the envoy courteously; but declined to disarm, or to proceed to Blois; but acquiesced in the departure of the Huguenot deputies from the States.

On the 17th of January, 1577, the king proceeded again in state to the hall of assembly to receive the addresses of the three orders—a ceremony which the feuds on religious matters, and the delay of Guise and some few members of note to present themselves at Blois, had retarded. The extravagant luxury again displayed by the king in his attire aroused strong indignation at a time when it was well known that disgraceful expedients were resorted to, to defray the daily expenses of the royal household. Even the sententious Guillaume de Taix, the eye-witness and most trusty historian of this national assembly, breaks off the thread of his narrative to describe the king's cloak—"a most surprising mantle, neither little nor big, of cloth of gold, lined with silver cloth, and trimmed so richly with

[1] "Le roy declara qu'il trouvoit bonnes les associations qui avoient été faites, et qu'il en avoit commandé d'autres et le dit devant les secretaires d'état, et commanda de les diligenter.' La reyne dit qu'elle avoit fait la paix en esperance que voyant son fils agé de 25 ans qu'elle le supplieroit de ne permettre qu'une religion en son royaume. Le roy dit qu'il avoit tel volonté, quand il parvint à la couronne, et fut sacré."—Journal des Etats de Blois l'an 1576, par M. le Duc de Nevers.

passementerie of pure bullion, that upon the said mantle, doublet, and *chausses* there were more than four thousand yards of the said *passementerie* of pure gold."[1] Ear-rings of lustrous diamonds hung from his majesty's ears; "for," says the duc de Nevers, "the king at this period commenced again to wear ear-rings, a fashion he had for some time abandoned." The king being seated on his throne, the duc de Guise holding the sword of state, the harangues commenced. The archbishop of Lyons[2] was the orator of the clergy—his oration lasting an hour and a quarter. He eloquently upheld the unity of the church, the necessity for the immediate publication of the canons of Trent, and denounced schism. In behalf of his order, the prelate offered his majesty an aid of 5000 infantry and 1200 horse. Next spoke the orator of the nobles, Claude de Beauffremont, baron de Senecy. The court had fallen in repute with the chivalrous aristocracy of France—gallant cavaliers whose ancestors had followed the banner of their king to conquest and renown. The brief oration of the baron de Senecy placed at his majesty's disposal the lives and services of his peers. A deputy named Pierre Versoris, and the president l'Huillier harangued for the Tiers Etat. This discourse was an acrimonious diatribe against schism; before the discerning eyes of Catherine the orator developed the furious prejudice and malignity of faction: the lesson was not lost on the queen. The orator of the people, after supplicating the king with vehemence to exterminate the foes and mockers of the one pure faith, closed his harangue by offering to his

[1] Recueil Sommaire de Guillaume de Taix, Doyen de Troyes, des Etats tenus à Blois l'an 1576, fol. 47.

[2] Pierre d'Espinac; this prelate was able, factious, and eloquent. The immorality of his life was, nevertheless, a perpetual scandal to the church: the pope refused to elevate him to the cardinalate on a formal charge of incest being preferred, which, however, was never proved. See Catholicon d'Espagne: Harangue de M. de Lyons.

majesty the bodies, estates, even to the very entrails (*trippes et boyaux*) of his people.[1] Not a hint, however, was given by the speaker of the Tiers Etat that the Commons were prepared to aid the king with a stated subsidy for the prosecution of the war of extermination demanded with such fanatic zeal.

A privy council was afterwards holden to take into consideration these addresses, and to debate whether war should be declared, in union with the forces of the League, against dissentients in matters of faith. The king directed that, within a stated number of days, the principal personages of the realm should deliver to him their written opinion on the expediency of a war, and on the best methods of supporting it. The chief parties consulted were Catherine, Monsieur—who with astute wiliness forgot to append his signature to the paper—the ducs de Guise, Montpensier, Mayenne, d'Usez, and several other persons. All these personages, afraid of committing themselves by opining contrary to the States assembled, did little else than endorse its resolution without comment of their own.[2] Catherine, the duc de Guise, and the duc de Nevers suggested to the privy council that, if war was resolved, no delay, not even of a single day, should be allowed to elapse before its formal proclamation; "for," as her majesty observed, "the States must then feel compelled to furnish funds for its prosecution, seeing that the sovereign acted implicitly on the demand and in the very presence of the national assembly." It was further concerted between the astute trio, that an attempt should be made to lure the king of Navarre to the court by the offer of an alliance between his sister and

[1] De Thou. Recueil Sommaire de Guillaume de Taix, fol. 48. La Place: Commentaires de l'Etat de la Religion et République, fol. 124. Monnier: Etats Généraux, p. 136.

[2] De Thou, liv. lxiii.

the duc d'Anjou; that he should then be arrested; and that the same fate should befall Monsieur. It was the intention of the queen to detain the princes until a general pacification; though her majesty proposed to treat them in prison with every honour consistent with their safe keeping. Henry, however, shrank from this bold measure; and insisted that a succour of money should be asked from the States in regular form before the proclamation of the war. "Sire, it will be refused your majesty, and with contumely," responded the queen. "You will become the jest of your enemies, not having a single sou in your exchequer to pay the rations even of your soldiers!" The duc de Guise, at this juncture, offered to the king the levy of troops secretly enrolled in each province by the chiefs of the *Sainte Union*. Henry surveyed the future king of the League in mute consternation. Memory must then have recalled to his majesty a similar offer made by Coligny to Charles IX.—a proposition which had been deemed treasonable by the council, and one worthy of death by Henry and his mother. The king, therefore, resolved no longer to delay his acceptance of the League, which he signed February 12th, 1577. The following day his majesty despatched Nicholas l'Huillier to carry the Act of Union to Paris, and to enjoin, in his name, its reception by all classes, and especially its signature by the members of the executive. Henry's envoy first waited upon the chief president of the parliament of Paris, Christopher de Thou. This venerable magistrate took the roll, and while he perused it tears of grief and indignation fell from his eyes; he declined to sign the act; but, taking up a pen, he indicated those articles he deemed of most fatal import, adding marginal comments. He then desired l'Huillier to carry the document to the king.[1] Henry afterwards despatched

[1] De Thou. Journal de Nevers.

Claude Dorron, a Master of Requests, to proceed to Paris, and learn more thoroughly the objections of de Thou, and to ask his counsels for the guidance of his majesty, now that the irrevocable step had been taken. "We have delayed too long before consulting M. de Thou," said his majesty; "let us now, at any rate, profit by his enlightened judgment."

The mind of king Henry was so disturbed on the day he set his signature to La Sainte Union, that, to solace himself, he departed about four o'clock in the afternoon with queen Louise on an expedition into the country. Their majesties alone occupied the coach, having with them a tribe of little dogs and two monkeys. The excursion was unfortunate; for, on returning to the castle of Blois about midnight, the coach overturned on a flagged pathway skirting the royal domain. The king and queen managed to extricate themselves from the vehicle, and returned on foot to the castle. Daily, during the *tracasseries* of the States, a round of festivities continued, the king entertaining in turn certain members of the assemblage. Balls, tiltings at the ring, jousts, and banquets followed in rapid succession; and gambling and masquerades afforded the provincial deputies a full insight into the vices of the court. Such was the profusion of the king, that he had projected fêtes during the carnival of 1577, the cost of which was calculated at 300,000 francs. The decease of the comte de Vaudemont,[1] father of queen Louise, caused the postponement of his majesty's revels. The king presented himself at many of these fêtes attired in the most extravagant fashion, often appearing with his habit open at the throat. His majesty, when so arrayed, wore three ruffs—one of lace thrown back on the shoulders, after

[1] Nicholas de Vaudemont deceased January 28th, 1577.

the fashion of the ladies of the court; and two smaller ones, very stiff, which joined the open doublet. The front of the pourpoint was studded with jewels and little chains, "which made a musical tinkle whenever the king moved;" and round his throat Henry often wore a carcanet of pearls. Rings, ear-rings, embroidered gloves and shoes, sword-knot, and a peruke frizzed and perfumed, completed Henry's costume. The mania of the unfortunate king was truly deplorable; the more so, as the contrast presented by the noble simplicity and manly dignity of the duc de Guise failed not to exalt that ideal hero of the orthodox, and proportionally to sully the repute of his master. The people even began to dwell with veneration on the memory of their late king Charles IX., whose paroxysms of mad violence seemed almost preferable to the inane frivolity of the present occupant of the throne. The profligate young lords of the chamber rivalled their royal master in his luxury and foppery. They were dreaded and avoided by all—by the nobles for their fierce insolence, and by the women of the court for their mendacity and slander. The fairest and most unsullied reputation was often shamelessly impugned; and unless Catherine called the delinquent to severe account, as she frequently did, the aggressor remained unpunished. The king delighted in the scandalous stories of his favourites; and is said to have taken especial relish in retailing them again to the sage and pious Louise. Marguerite and the duchesse de Nevers made common cause, and often avenged themselves summarily on their assailants. The queen of Navarre adorned the fêtes of Blois by her wit and beauty. She seems to have there renewed the closest relations with the duc de Guise. Catherine tried to turn this circumstance to account by writing, about this period, to the princess Catherine of Navarre, that

the duc de Guise "*faisoit l'amour à la reyne sa fille,*"[1] in the hope that this intelligence might aid in bringing the king of Navarre to Blois. The duc d'Anjou was strictly watched by his royal mother, lest, on the one hand, he should make undue overtures to the States; or escape to join Damville in Languedoc, now that the war seemed likely to be renewed. Monsieur, however, employed himself, on the whole, decorously, writing love-letters to queen Elizabeth, or diversifying his leisure by gallant attentions to madame de Sauve. The duchesse de Montpensier, of all the courtly throng assembled at Blois, appears to have been the least disturbed by care. The only sister of Guise, a princess of the blood by marriage, abhorring all but political intrigue, madame de Montpensier moved loftily along, placing no restraint on the bitterness of her sarcasm, the which found abundant scope amid the scenes she daily witnessed.

The king, during the month of February, at length took courage to make the important demand of a subsidy of 2,000,000 of francs from the States. This request was flatly refused, the deputies declaring "that they had no powers from their electors to treat of matters of finance." The members then, in their turn, demanded the dissolution of the States, as the matter concerning religion had been settled by their abrogation of the convention of Beaulieu; and many deputies made preparation for departure. The king met this device by issuing a mandate commanding that every member, before his departure, should ask an audience of farewell. The deputies, continuing obdurate, and firmly refusing a subsidy, or to sanction the imposition of fresh taxes, the duc d'Anjou entered the hall, and

[1] "Une autre fois la reyne (Catherine) dit à M. de Guise que le roy de Navarre ne trouvoit bon qu'il recherchat sa femme!"—Journal de Nevers.

petulantly reproached the members with their inconsistency in driving their sovereign to make a declaration of war, and then to refuse him the necessary succours for its prosecution. "The king," says Guillaume de Taix, "in spite of these his expedients, obtained nothing. The Tiers Etat turned a deaf ear to every remonstrance, and declined to offer aid whatever, excusing itself on the poverty of the people; also, that its powers were only entrusted to legislate on matters of religion, and to relieve the people from the burdensome taxation which already ground them to the dust." In reply to the remonstrances of Monsieur, several deputies rose, and denied that they had advised the king to make war on the heretics;[1] "but," said they, with a flippant disingenuousness which proceeded from the distrust inspired by the king, "we advised his majesty to enforce one holy and pure religion on his subjects by kind and gracious methods, converting apostates by the power of the Word, and not with the sword!" The same declaration was afterwards actually made to the king by the first president of the parliament of Bordeaux. The deputies who so opined sought only to extricate themselves from a predicament which placed their zeal in a suspicious light, as inferior to their love of pelf; the miserable contests of the past years, and the expedient they had themselves sanctioned, of an armed union for the defence of the faith, demonstrated how slender was their trust in the efficacy of the ministrations of the priesthood. Catherine was extremely incensed when she heard of this declaration, saying, "that it was dishonourable and base so to abandon the king after urging him to break the peace."

[1] "La reyne pleure à son cabinet, se plaignant avec la reyne sa fille des trois qui avoient conseillé le roy à la guerre, et qu'ils s'en exemptoient de l'avoir dit."—Journal de Nevers. The duc de Nevers was one of the delinquents of whom Catherine so bitterly complained.

Various ways were then debated for a reformation of the existing system of taxation, so that it might yield a larger revenue. A plan was proposed by some astute financier, to compound all the taxes into one general impost, to the annual amount of 15,000,000 of livres, levied on all households of the realm, the highest rate of taxation not to exceed fifty francs, and the lowest 12 deniers. This scheme was rejected, by an immense majority of the States, on the ground that there would be no security, the king having obtained this concession, that his majesty might not gradually re-impose the taxes abandoned; or, at any rate, augment at pleasure the rate of the new impost.

The king next sent a message to his unruly legislature, to ask its sanction to alienate a sum of 300,000 livres from the royal domain, to relieve his immediate necessities. It was also stated that his majesty's debts amounted to the sum of 101,000,000 of livres; that the expenditure of the state had, during the last few years, exceeded the revenue by 11,000,000 of livres annually. Catherine, meantime, despatched the abbé Guadagne to ask a loan of 2,000,000 of gold crowns from the king of Fez, the most fabulous stories being current at this period, respecting the vast treasures amassed by that African potentate. The queen found her Mahometan ally more liberal than the king did his senate; for his majesty's demands again met with positive denial by the majority of members, although some of the deputies protested against so rigorous a procedure. The majority suggested that the necessity of the king should be relieved by one of the three following expedients—proposals, the harbingers indeed of a national revolution, social as well as civil—that the nobility of the realm should be called upon to serve his majesty gratis, the costs of their levies to be defrayed by themselves, not, as heretofore, by the realm;

that, rather than the domains of the crown should be alienated, the temporalities of the church might be seized, and employed to replenish the empty exchequer of the State; or that the property, real and personal, of all Huguenots should be confiscated, and applied for the benefit of the commonwealth. Should his majesty dissent from either of these alternatives, he was in solently admonished to maintain, if he could, the recen edict of Beaulieu, when his ordinary revenues of t domain must suffice for his private use.[1] Tears f anger and mortification, it is stated, fell from the 'c yes of the weak monarch, when informed of the obdu dcy of the assembly. "It is too cruel a treatment!" ex- claimed he; "they refuse to aid me with their sub- stance, and deny me the use of my own!"

The duc de Montpensier at this juncture re urned from his mission to the king of Navarre. He found that prince well disposed for the maintenance o peace, provided that he was not molested, and was su fered to retire into Béarn. At the same time the du ke brought news of a counter-league on the point of atification between the Huguenots of France, the q ueen of England, and the kings of Sweden and Denma rk. He represented the feverish condition of the cou try—already in arms against the royal authority—and th e immediate necessity for action, did the king desire t o repress the threatened movement. He advised Henry to annul his late edict of Beaulieu; but to undert ke no campaign against the allied princes; to content hi nself with recapturing the places recently surprised; and to show a firm front against their extortions. The queen seconded this counsel; indeed, the exh usted finances admitted of no alternative. It was determined, therefore, to set on foot two bodies of troops to act on the defensive; the command of one of which was conferred on Mon-

[1] Recueil Sommaire de Guillaume de Taix, fol. 63.

sicur, with la Chastre for his maréchal-de-camp, his lieutenants being the ducs de Guise, d'Aumale, and de Nevers. The second *corps-d'armée* was intrusted to the duc de Mayenne—a command-in-chief having been refused to the duc de Guise, so great was now Henry's distrust. The States were then closed on the first day of March, 1577, by king Henry, who departed greatly dejected from Blois, and joined the queen-mother at Chenonceau.

If affairs before the assemblage of the States were complicated, they had become doubly so at the close of the session. The sole act of the States had been to annul the treaty of Beaulieu; while the deputies absolutely refused to vote a subsidy for the prosecution of the consequent war. The debates had roused the fiercest passions and enmities. The power of the princes of Lorraine, which before had been undefined, was acknowledged: their pretensions, moreover, proclaimed to the nation by the pamphlet of the advocate David, had excited no indignant protest. The League had been confirmed and rendered legal by the sanction of the king and his acceptance of the title of its chief. The king himself, therefore, by a strange fatuity, had placed himself at the head of a combination, the aim of which was to overthrow and usurp his royal prerogatives, committing the fatal and inconceivable error of consenting to exercise those his kingly rights in the capacity alone of a chief of the League! The penury of the government was proclaimed to the malcontents; who, rejoicing in the refusal of the States to replenish the treasury, boldly prepared fresh enterprises.

The duc d'Anjou, meanwhile, acting now in the capacity of royal general, marched and laid siege to the town of La Charité[1] with an army of 15,000 men.

[1] La Charité had been captured by the Huguenots during the session of the states of Blois.

The town capitulated on the 2nd of May, when Monsieur and the duc de Guise, leaving the duc de Nevers in command, returned to participate in the festivities to be given in honour of this success, which was magnified by the court poets into a magnificent victory.

The first entertainment was given by the king at Plessis-les-Tours to Monsieur and the principal officers of the army, which had captured La Charité. The details of this most profligate revel of a profligate court arouse feelings of disgust and indignation. The banquet was holden in the park of Plessis; the guests were served by the most beautiful women of the court, whose streaming tresses were their only covering to the waist. The orgies lasted from midday to midnight. Coloured lamps were suspended amid the trees, besides a grand illumination of torches and cressets. The cost of the green silk vestments worn by the ladies, and given by the king, amounted to the sum of 60,000 francs.[1] Such, nevertheless, was the hypocritical inconsistency of the court that, shortly before the king quitted Blois, one of Catherine's maids of honour—mademoiselle de la Motte Mesme—had been dismissed ignominiously by her royal mistress, when it was discovered that she had consented to a midnight assignation in the grand avenue of the castle with the marquis d'Elbœuf; "such proceedings," his majesty observed, "being *contre l'honnêteté.*" Four days after the banquet of Plessis, Catherine entertained the king and court at her castle of Chenonceau, at a cost of 100,000 francs. This entertainment was holden round the margin of a beautiful fountain, and seems to have been exempt from the gross indecorum of Henry's fête at Plessis. The ladies were attired in robes of tricoloured brocade. The duchesse de Retz acted as mistress of the ceremonies, being aided in her duties by madame de Sauve. Other festivities followed: and,

[1] L'Etoile: Journal de Henri III. Brantôme.

at any rate, amid such profuse expenditure, Henry had cause to thank the deputies for their peremptory refusal to alienate any portion of the royal revenue.

The duc de Mayenne during these transactions steadily made progress in Poitou against Condé, and pursued him to the very gates of La Rochelle. The king was at Chenonceau when he received this intelligence, and also that of the capture of Issoire by Nevers. In the fulness of his satisfaction Henry bestowed the name of Château de Bonnes Nouvelles on his mother's palace of Chenonceau. Mayenne then laid siege to Brouage, and pushed the assault with such vigour that the capitulation of the place was deemed inevitable. Henry, therefore, determined to proceed to Poitiers. His arms had hitherto been successful; but his majesty desired nothing more intensely in the position of his finances than peace. To ensure this desirable event, Henry suddenly offered again to his malcontent subjects the edict of Beaulieu with certain modifications. Such concession, however, was in direct opposition to the principles and interests of the League, and to his majesty's obligations as its chief and leader; thenceforth, in the eyes of the members of La Sainte Union, Henry appeared a traitor to his solemn oath, perjured, and a faithless interloper in the cause. The power of his Huguenot subjects in arms saved the king from immediate rebellion; but instinctively the allegiance of the ultra-orthodox reverted to the duc de Guise, and mentally, if not openly, they hailed him as a worthy chief and leader. The queen, however, heartily combined to bring about the peace which was to bestow temporary repose on the harassed realm; and to rescue her son from the overwhelming difficulties resulting from the recent deliberations. The new edict contained sixty-three articles, modifying the clauses of the treaty negotiated at Beaulieu; the privilege of worship, according

to the reformed tenets, being confined to the districts conceded in former edicts under Charles IX. No *prêche* might be holden within thirty miles of Paris; the towns recently captured remained in his majesty's possession; the marriage of converted priests was acknowledged to be legal; while a general amnesty was conceded. The king of Navarre hastened to ratify the treaty, which was also signed by Condé, and published by his command at La Rochelle by torchlight amid the firing of artillery.

The concession again of this peace was the only independent act performed by Henry III. throughout his troublous reign. The king ever afterwards complacently alluded to this pacification, which he specially termed "Mon Edit de Poitiers."

The joy of the king was rudely interrupted by the tumult occasioned by the cowardly assassination committed by the reigning favourite Villequier on the person of his wife, in the castle of Poitiers, within sight of his majesty's apartments. Madame de Villequier was the natural daughter of the comte de Montbazon. United to such a man as Réné de Villequier, her life had been miserable, though the splendour of her position drew upon her much envy. It appears that the jealousy of her husband was excited as to the nature of her relations with one Barbizy, a young lord of the court. During the sojourn of the king at Poitiers, Villequier received an anonymous letter accusing his wife of criminal misdemeanours, and it stated that a plot had been formed to poison Villequier before her dishonour should become manifest. Villequier accordingly caused a secret search to be made in the cabinet of his wife, when a packet of letters, addressed to madame de Villequier by Barbizy, was found; and, moreover, a cake of white-looking compound, which was supposed to be the poison destined to slay him.

De Thou asserts his belief that madame de Villequier was innocent of the crime alleged against her; but that she had incurred the detestation of the king and of her husband by boldly rebuking their excesses. This opinion, however, is confirmed by no other contemporary writer. One morning, therefore, Villequier entered his wife's bedchamber; the unfortunate lady had just risen, and was combing her hair before a mirror held by one of her women. Villequier rushed upon her, and buried a poniard to the hilt in her side; he then inflicted several severe wounds with his sword, and left her dead on the floor. He then pursued the waiting-maid, and despatched her also with repeated thrusts of his dagger. These atrocious deeds accomplished, the assassin proceeded to the king's bedside and coolly recounted his crime, requesting letters of pardon under the great seal, as the provocation extenuated his offence.

The uproar in the castle was tremendous when the bodies of madame de Villequier and her maid were found weltering in blood, life totally extinct; and the outcry against the assassin was so vehement, that Henry hesitated whether it were not more prudent to yield up his favourite to justice.[1] Catherine, who had accompanied the king to Poitiers, joined in the clamour, and exhorted her son to punish so vile a crime with exemplary rigour. Villequier, however, by the favour of his royal master, departed secretly for Paris; and by the time the court returned thither, the horror occasioned by his crime had diminished; while fresh deeds of violence, committed by the profligate favourites, helped to cast a veil of oblivion over the past. The magnificence of Villequier's public entertainments at the Hôtel de Ville as lieutenant-governor of Paris, also helped to allay

[1] De Thou: Journal de Henri III. Brantôme. Castelnau: Additions par le Laboureur, tome ii.

popular indignation. Before long another lady was announced as having condescended to Villequier's suit, and to have declared her willingness to accept his blood-stained hand. Mademoiselle de la Bretesche,[1] therefore, became Villequier's second wife; a lady young, well dowered, and a special favourite with queen Catherine. Villequier's deportment in his second alliance is stated to have been exemplary. Madame de la Bretesche, the mother of his wife, had been a woman of passions so vehement, that men quailed before the fierceness of her wrath; and it is related that on three occasions during her life she set forth in male attire to waylay and poniard persons who had incurred her enmity; achievements which she not only accomplished successfully, but with impunity. It is possible, therefore, that Villequier's amiable conduct may have resulted from personal misgiving, after taking this lion's whelp to his arms.

The court made sojourn at Poitiers until the end of the month of October, when Henry repaired to Paris and took up his abode in the Louvre, and queen Catherine in the Tuileries. The appearance of a large and fiery comet during the month of November, 1577, caused great terror to many illustrious personages, it having been declared by Ruggieri, and other astrologers, to denote the approaching decease of the queen-mother, or of some great French lady. The prediction occasioned the queen the most exquisite solicitude, as she placed implicit faith in signs, omens, and spells. Throughout the dreary winter months, therefore, the Parisians watched with curious interest the pale-blue light which night after night glimmered through a casement at the summit of the lofty tower behind the hôtel de Soissons, built by the queen-mother for astro-

[1] Louise de la Savonnière, daughter of Jean baron de la Bretesche, one of the beauties of the court of Henry III.

logical observations. That small chamber was Catherine's nocturnal resort, and the scene of many mystic conferences with Cosmo Ruggieri and other professors of the occult sciences, her *protégés*.

The wits of Paris, however, offered to the queen that solution which the stars refused, in the guise of a cutting epigram, in which her majesty's panic was ridiculed; and the author, a fiery Leaguer, proved that the comet had been sent as a political diaphoretic, in order to dissipate the vapours which obscured the queen's diplomatic judgment.

Queen Catherine and her seers, nevertheless, obtained what they considered to be a satisfactory elucidation of the portentous omen, by the demise, on the second day of April of the following year, 1578, of the little daughter of the late king Charles IX., madame Isabel Marie de France.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

1578—1579.

Diversions of the court during the winter of 1578—The chamberlains—Their luxury and amusements—Paris in 1578—Journey of queen Marguerite to the Netherlands—Her intrigues—Political condition of the Low Countries—The sovereignty of the Netherlands is offered to the duc d'Anjou—Unpopularity of Henry III.—Quarrels of the minions—MM. de Bussy-d'Amboise and de Quélus—Marriage of M. de St. Luc—Disaffection of the duc d'Anjou and of his sister queen Marguerite—Meditated flight of the duke—Details—Arrest of Monsieur and of the queen of Navarre—Catherine insists on the release of the prisoners—Flight of the duke—His proceedings—Anger of king Henry—Demeanour of Marguerite—Correspondence of the duke with the king—His letter to Villeroy—The duke is joined by many adherents—Journey of Catherine to Angers—Its results—Political consequences of the duke's evasion—Processions of penitents—The chancellor Cheverny—Correspondence of Monsieur with the Flemish malcontents—His departure for Mons—Opinion of king Henry upon the conduct of his brother M. d'Anjou.

The winter of 1578 was spent by Henry III. in the enjoyment of festivals and pageants. Although the national penury was so great that the credit even of the sovereign sufficed not to raise a loan, the splendid revels of the court augmented rather than decreased in number; while the people waited in vain for the commencement of that more provident career which Henry had emphatically promised during his contentions with the members of the recent States-general. The royal revenue, which in former reigns averaged the sum of thirty-one millions of crowns, and which had amply

defrayed the costs of the magnificent court of Francis I., was reduced by more than two-thirds; yet Charles IX. died leaving few debts chargeable on the privy purse. The pecuniary difficulties of the king appeared to make no salutary impression on his mind; he still gave or squandered away sums to an incredible amount. When the public treasure failed, Henry and his favourite Villequier issued edicts authorizing levies of money on various wealthy individuals or corporate bodies, which they called "édits bursaux." Henry was frequently obliged to carry these bills to the parliament in person, and command their registration, forbidding discussion or remonstrance whatever.

The number of the king's privileged chamberlains, at the commencement of the year 1578, amounted to ten personages. These young cavaliers filled the court with broils, exacting almost servile homage from the nobles of the court, fighting, assailing the reputation of the noblest ladies with impunity, gambling, and perpetrating fraudulent appropriations of the revenue. Their effeminacy and luxury, on the other hand, when in attendance on their royal master, and in the adornment of their person, surpassed the most extravagant of antecedents. Henry liked his *protégés* to assume in public the fierce swagger of bravoes; while in private, to please their royal master, they put on the garb of women, curling and perfuming their hair, cutting out attire, manufacturing perfumes and cosmetics, singing licentious songs to the accompaniment of guitars or mandolins—or entertaining this royal Sardanapalus with mendacious stories respecting the profligacy of various personages of the court, in contrast to which they made the royal turpitude shine as virtue. For hours, during the heat of the day, it was now Henry's custom to repose on a divan surrounded by this crew, lazily drinking sherbets in lieu of wine, of which his constitution forbad the

use—plenishing his mind by such villanous recitals for the random taunts which, during the evening revel, brought many a blush to the cheeks of the truly decorous of his court. On the cushions by the king lay a number of little dogs, which Henry sometimes fondled or incited to make deafening clamour. The number of lapdogs thus kept in his majesty's apartments often exceeded a hundred—seldom fewer. One of the favourite chamberlains observing that it cost the king emotion to select from this pack, the dogs which were to accompany him in his daily airing with queen Louise, invented the novel expedient of a light basket, richly lined with crimson satin, to be slung from the royal neck, wherein from twenty to thirty of Henry's diminutive pets might be comfortably stowed. The king adopted the device, bestowing many eulogiums on the ingenuity of his favourite. Parrots and a small species of ape also monopolized a great share of Henry's attention. To the former he taught any libellous slang which then might be in vogue; while the apes were reserved as a medium of special intimidation to unwished-for intruders in the royal apartments; or of vengeance on individuals obnoxious to the chamberlains. The king's hours of indolent pastime were often abruptly brought to a close by a sudden inspiration to perform some devout progress with which Henry pretended to have been smitten. The royal dressers were then summoned, and after elaborate labour Henry was equipped, and proceeded with most sanctified mien to spend the afternoon on his knees in one or other of the oratories he had founded in the churches of the capital. At other seasons Henry broke up the luxurious conclave for the more mundane excitement of a foray with his troop to the saloon of the maids of honour. The insults which then sometimes befell the noblest maidens of France, the pen of Brantôme even shrinks from

recording. The door of the apartment was rudely dashed open; and fortunate was that damsel considered who could make a timely escape to the queen's cabinet, where Louise sat over her embroidery frame absorbed in religious meditation, pensive and sad. During these royal *escapades* Catherine held her council of state at the Tuileries, or in her hôtel des Filles Repenties.[1] Her majesty opened all despatches, decreed laws, received the ministers and other functionaries, and forwarded instructions to the foreign ambassadors—her responsibilities being limited to a daily visit to the Louvre to request the sign-manual of her son to the documents she laid before him. The duc d'Anjou plotted and betrayed — trusting, however flagitious might be his design, to escape its judicial reprisals under the good favour of one or other of the partners in the government.

In one of the most pungent satires composed during this reign, the author relates the ceremonies used at the *lever* of Henry's minions. It has been supposed that Quélus was the personage falling peculiarly under the lash of the satirist. "On entering the chamber of the royal *mignons*," says he, "I first beheld three cavaliers whose hair was being seized with hot pincers, heated in a chafing-dish, so that their heads were smoking. Such a sight I deemed at first alarming, and was about to cry for succour; but on a closer examination I perceived that no hurt was being inflicted. One of the victims was reading, another joking

[1] This celebrated palace was inhabited during five hundred years by the most illustrious personages of the age. It changed its owners during this interval twenty times, and its name five times. It was successively designated as l'hôtel de Nesle, l'hôtel de Bohême, l'hôtel du Couvent des Filles Repenties, l'hôtel de la Reyne, and, finally, l'hôtel de Soissons. The hôtel was situated in the Quartier de St. Eustache, and its site is now occupied by the Halle au Blé. Queen Catherine's celebrated obelisk still remains.

with his valet, and a third discoursing on philosophy. From this chamber I entered into a second, where I beheld a single cavalier seated helplessly in a chair, and surrounded by several attendants. One was holding before him a mirror; another had a large box of cypress-wood filled with powder, into which he repeatedly plunged a large puff and powdered the head of his patient. This achieved, a third individual advanced holding a fine instrument, with which he tore superfluous hairs from his master's eyebrows, leaving an arch clear and defined. In a corner of the room a thick vapour was rising from a vessel, which they called a *sublimatum*, the which being condensed, they brought and applied to the cheeks, lips, forehead, and neck of our victim. Another then came, and kneeling, opened the patient's mouth by gently pulling his beard; then wetting his finger, he rubbed a white powder on his gums, and from a little box he took some false teeth and fastened them in wherever there was space. Next, the personage who had coloured our victim's cheeks again approached, and with a brush he painted over his beard, which until now had been of fiery hue, afterwards washing it with perfumed waters and soaps. They then brought silk stockings, and a pair of shoes marvellously small and dainty. During this ceremony a fourth valet-de-chambre was airing before the fire a shirt adorned with exquisite needlework. This being slipped over our patient's head, the collar was set upright, and his doublet brought, which was so tight that it took all the strength that we could muster to button it." He then describes how "*cette demie-femme*" was equipped with two pairs of perfumed gloves, handkerchief, rings, chains, a mirror, fan of delicate lace-work, pomander, and comfit boxes, a hat and plumes, and a *sachet*. Next the author introduces us into the royal bedchamber. Henry was sleeping in a room the floor

of which was plentifully strewn with roses and other flowers. The bed was a magnificent edifice of gilding and cloth of silver. The king reposed in the middle of the bed, supported by crimson satin pillows. His face was covered by a half-mask made of some shining material dipped in odoriferous oil, which the chief valet carefully readjusted after he had offered his majesty an early collation of sweetmeats and rolled meats spiced.

His majesty's hands were covered with gloves richly embroidered; and his *manteau-de-nuit* was composed of white satin, adorned round the neck with silver spangles and tags.[1] The example set by the king in effeminate costliness of attire produced the most ruinous consequences. "The novelties in dress at this court," says the Venetian Lippomano,[2] "succeed each other daily, and even hourly. If the shape of our raiment varies, so does the mode of wearing it alter. At present the cloak is placed over one shoulder, and allowed to fall from the other; one sleeve of our doublet is worn loose (at the wrist), and the other is buttoned up tight. When on horseback it is now the mode for cavaliers to ride with a drawn sword in the hand, as if pursuing the enemy, in the fashion of Polish magnates. No man is esteemed at court unless he possesses from twenty-five to thirty suits of raiment, so that he may appear every day in different attire. Old men dress more soberly, wearing suits of extremely fine silken or woollen fabrics." About this period Henry introduced the fashion of the tall ruff, so stiffened, "that when handled it cracked like coarse parchment." This fashion never became popular beyond the precincts

[1] Description de l'Isle des Hermaphrodites, Satyre, par Thomas Artus. Edited by Godefroy.

[2] Viaggio del Signor Girolamo Lippomano, Ambasciator in Francia nell' anno 1577, scritto del suo Secretario.—Tommassio: Ambassadeurs Venitiens.

of the Louvre; it, however, enabled his majesty's enemies to infuse another pungent point in their satires and caricatures. Soon after Henry made his public appearance in the obnoxious "*fraise,*" his majesty happening to visit the Foire de St. Germain, observed some of the students of Paris caricaturing his attire by wearing immense ruffs of stiff paper, and shouting, "*à la fraise on connoit le veau!*" The king sentenced his irreverent mimickers to imprisonment for the space of seven days in the Conciergerie. As for the fair dames of the court, their extravagance equalled the profusion of their lords. The queen of Navarre was hailed by universal consent as the oracle in matters relating to female costume. "Frenchwomen," says the Venetian Lippomano, in his record, "have very slight waists; they take pleasure in puffing out their robes by means of hoops, which render their figure very elegant. They take pains to procure fine stockings and shoes. They all wear corsets which hook behind, and give a most becoming shape to the bust." From describing the attire of the courtiers, the Venetian ambassador proceeds to give most interesting details of the mode of living in Paris in 1578, and of the luxurious households maintained by the great nobles. "Paris furnishes an abundance of all that can be desired," says Lippomano. "Merchandise from all parts of the world is here congregated. Food is brought on the Seine from all the provinces; and although the population is dense, nothing is wanted. The price of eatables, nevertheless, is high; but the French never disburse so willingly as to buy food and to make what they term *bonne chère.* This is the reason why butchers, restaurateurs, pastry-cooks, tavern-keepers abound. There is not a street in which they are not to be found. Do you desire to buy live animals, or meat, you are able so to do hourly. Do you wish your provision to be

dressed, the pastry-cooks and cooks, in less than an hour, can furnish you with a dinner or a supper for ten, for twenty, or even for a hundred persons. The *rôtisseur* provides the meat; the pastry-cook the pies, tarts, entrées, and dessert; the confectioner contributes the jellies, sauces, and ragouts. The art of gastronomy is so advanced in Paris, that you can name a repast at any price, from a *teston*, or for from one crown to twenty. For this last sum I verily believe you could obtain manna soup, a roast phœnix, or anything that is most precious in the world." The ambassador states, that on Wednesdays and Saturdays a market was holden for the sale of hares, rabbits, kids, and sucking pigs; wine being also sold every Wednesday. Hay, wood, corn, and coal, being commodities brought by barges on the Seine, were generally exposed for sale at the wharves. The houses were rented by the week or the month; and the ambassador informs his senate, that the poorest furnished lodging in Paris costs from two to three crowns the month. The finest private hôtels in Paris were those appertaining to the ducs de Nevers, de Montmorency, and de Montpensier, the palace of the prince de Condé, and the hôtels de Sens and de Brienne. There were more than eighteen hundred tennis-courts in various parts of the city; and it was calculated that the sum of one thousand crowns was daily spent in the purchase of rackets. "In short," says Lippomano, "Paris is a chaos of confusion and luxury—a condition admirable and astonishing to behold!"

The queen of Navarre, after the closing of the States of Blois, had quitted the court to make a sojourn of some months at Spa, the mineral waters, it was publicly announced, having been recommended for her health. Marguerite's journey, however, had a twofold cause. During the recent tumultuous discussions she

had more and more espoused the party and interests of the duc d'Anjou. The insults which she thereupon experienced from the king and his favourites rendered the court intolerable, and she longed for the period when Monsieur, having obtained an independent sovereignty, might afford her an asylum. Consequently Marguerite entered with the greatest eagerness into the negotiation proposed by the States of the Netherlands, to elevate the duc d'Anjou to the sovereignty of the Low Countries. The project had been negatived by the king, courteously declined by queen Catherine, but secretly entertained by Marguerite and her brother. The sway of the duke of Alba over the Belgian provinces terminated in 1573. On his retirement from his viceroyalty, Alba boasted that he had decapitated eighteen thousand men; and that his annual confiscations amounted to more than eight millions of gold crowns![1] Alba was succeeded by don Luis de Requesens, whose tenure of power was brief. On the decease of Requesens, Philip II. appointed his brother don Juan of Austria to the dignity of governor of the Netherlands, —a nomination execrated by the hostile factions and by the people generally, who demanded a Flemish viceroy and the recall of the Spanish legions. This demand being harshly refused by Philip, the Protestant and Roman-Catholic provinces of the Low Countries and Holland had entered into a confederation for mutual protection, moved thereto by the sack of the rich city of Antwerp by the Spaniards. The Confederation of Ghent was submitted to don Juan on his arrival, who sanctioned it in the name of the king, and feigned to confirm its articles; no sooner, however, had he consequently been received in Brussels, than, acting with a dissimulation worthy of the brother of Philip II., he disowned the convention, and seized the citadels of

[1] Histoire du Duc d'Albe.

Namur, Charlemont, and Marienbourg. The lords, parties to the Confederation of Ghent, then entered into articles of closer alliance; and after electing for their governor the archduke Matthias,[1] they boldly defied the authority of don Juan, and ranged themselves under the banner of Orange, who acted in the capacity of lieutenant to the imperial viceroy. Don Juan, whose military talents qualified him for any emergency, waited the advance of Farnese[2] with reinforcements, and then offered the confederates battle at Gembloux. Victory again attended the arms of the hero of Lepanto. This achievement produced a fresh political crisis. Sudden jealousy between the faction of Orange and the lords professing the orthodox faith, and the violence of some zealots in denuding the churches in Ghent of their images, occasioned the dissolution of a confederation which the valour and treachery of don Juan had shaken, but yet had failed to destroy. The Protestant provinces, and some few of the Catholic lords, adhered to Orange and the imperial governor whom he had nominated; while Montigny, Lalain, Mansfeld, and others covertly offered the government of the Low Countries to the duc d'Anjou. Don Juan, meanwhile, reinforced by fresh aids of men and money, and joined by several powerful nobles, once supporters of the extinct Confederation of Ghent, prepared vigorously to re-assert the supremacy of Spain throughout the revolted provinces. Marguerite's design, therefore, in traversing the Netherlands, was to fortify and to intrigue for the party willing to accept the rule of the duc d'Anjou; and through the influence of her beauty and address to

[1] Second son of the emperor Maximilian, and of Marie, sister of the king of Spain. Subsequently Matthias succeeded his brother the emperor Rodolph.

[2] Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma, son of Marguerite, illegitimate daughter of the emperor Charles V., and of Ottavio Farnese, second duke of Parma. The prince had been educated at the court of Madrid.

impress at the same time upon Philip's viceroy the belief that Monsieur was averse to enter upon a conflict in order to despoil the Spanish crown of her finest provinces. On the closing of the States Marguerite had requested permission to rejoin her husband in Gascony; more, however, in contradiction of the scandalous reports propagated by the queen-mother relative to her *liaison* with Guise, than from any real desire for reconciliation with the king of Navarre. To this request Henry had given the most positive negative. "No, no, *ma sœur*, you shall not go!" replied his majesty. "If you attempt to escape, as you threaten, be assured that you can have no more cruel enemies than myself and the queen your mother. We would make you feel your disobedience by every means in our power; so that you would render still more perilous the position of the king your husband." Marguerite withdrew from the royal presence thoroughly exasperated at the taunting tone of the king. Her indignation was augmented on the following day when she learned that Henry had dismissed the envoy of the king of Navarre with the contemptuous message, "Tell your master that I gave my sister to a Catholic, and not to a Huguenot! if, therefore, he wishes to see his consort again, let him change his faith!"[1] The duc de Guise and queen Marguerite had neither of them forgotten or relinquished their ancient compact to make the king one day feel the weight of their resentment. Their interviews at this season were frequent: sometimes the duc d'Anjou joined the conferences; at other periods, fearful of incurring the displeasure of Catherine, he refrained. No expedient existed that was more certain to embroil the realm with Spain than by presenting Monsieur, the heir-presumptive of France, as

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. Mongez: Vie de la Reyne Marguerite de Valois.

Philip's rival in the Low Countries; no surer method could, moreover, be devised of driving king Henry into closer alliance with the League, than the prospect of a war with his potent neighbour. The south of France belonged to the king of Navarre and to the Montmorenci; the central provinces appertained by the treaty of Beaulieu to Monsieur; Paris ridiculed the king, and refused to aid him with money or credit; the eastern provinces owned the sway of Lorraine; and there needed only, therefore, but the terror of the advancing hosts of Philip II. to drive the king to seek protection from the League and its champion Guise. Marguerite accordingly entered her mother's cabinet, and demanded permission to accompany madame de la Roche-sur-Yon[1] to Spa, "as," said the queen, "it is neither honourable nor expedient that I should remain at this court a witness of the war which your majesties are about to wage against the king my husband." Marguerite obtained permission to make her journey to Spa, and set out from Blois at the same time that the court proceeded to Poitiers. The progress of the queen of Navarre was triumphant; everywhere her wit and address gained partisans to her brother's cause. The count Lalain and his brother Montigny, chieftains of the army opposed by the States of Flanders against the enterprises of don Juan and his Spaniards, and Orange and the Huguenots, came to a complete understanding with her, according to the queen's own statement, on the pretensions of Monsieur. She was also magnificently received and entertained by don Juan in Namur, on her road to Liège. During

[1] Philippe de Montespedon, first the wife of the maréchal de Montejon. Madame de Montejon, being a beautiful and wealthy widow, espoused for her second husband the prince de la Roche, nephew of the great constable de Bourbon. She died in 1578, April 12, of the disorder for which she sought the baths of Spa.

the interval of the queen's sojourn in this latter place, don Juan received intelligence of Marguerite's true designs; of her intrigues to overthrow the dominion of Philip II.; and of her correspondence with Lalain. The inference even is strong that the Spaniards were indebted to the king of France for this notification. The journey of the queen back again into France, therefore, was beset with perils; and she narrowly escaped arrest by a troop of horse sent by don Juan under the count de Barlaimont to conduct her to Namur. Through the prompt succour of Lalain, and other adherents of the faction of the States, Marguerite at length arrived at La Fère, the magnificent domain inherited by the king of Navarre from his ancestors of Vendôme.[1] Here the queen was joined by the duc d'Anjou, who, as usual, while fighting the battles of his favourite Bussy, had fallen into disgrace with his royal brother. The duke and his sister remained at La Fère for the space of two months,[2] when they together journeyed to Paris at the commencement of the year 1578.

The feuds of the *mignons* of the king and Monsieur at this period excluded every other debate or negotiation. Nearly the whole of the year was absorbed by discussions to adjust these disgraceful brawls; the mediation of queen Catherine and the privy council, and even that of the parliament of Paris itself, being requisite to restore order and decorum at court. Bussy d'Amboise, the champion of Monsieur, was the chief cause of contention, by his intemperate and pugnacious deportment. Four gentlemen in the service of Monsieur,

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. Mongez: Vie de Marguerite. Brantôme.

[2] The transports of the duc d'Alençon were so great, that he was perpetually exclaiming, "O, ma reyne, qu'il fait bon d'être avec vous! Mon Dieu, cette compagnie est un paradis comblé de toutes sortes de délices, et celle d'où je suis party un enfer rempli de toutes sortes de furies!"

after the flight of Villequier from Poitiers, abandoned the duke, and took office in the household of the king, deeming their fortune made by the presumed downfall of that favourite. Their names were la Valette,[1] Livarrot, Grammont, and Mauléon. After the return of the court to Paris, this feud was pursued with virulence, Bussy taking the lead amongst Monsieur's partisans; and Quélus heading his colleagues in the service of the king. On Twelfth-day, 1578, during the court festivity, mademoiselle de Pons was proclaimed *Reine de la Fève.* After the banquet Henry conducted the queen of the festival to hear vespers in the chapel of the adjacent hôtel de Bourbon. The king and his *mignons* were attired with elaborate magnificence. Monsieur presently appeared, arrayed in a simple black doublet, and attended by Bussy and other gentlemen. A retinue of retainers, however, followed; and conspicuous amongst these were six pages in the service of Bussy, clad in sumptuous habits of cloth of gold, and wearing ruffs and plumes in imitation of the costume of the royal *mignons.* "We live in days when it is the turn of vagabonds to wear fine habits!" observed the insolent favourite as he took his place behind Monsieur. The following night an attempt upon the life of Bussy was made as he returned to his lodgings from the Louvre. Grammont being suspected of having led this ambuscade, was openly assailed the next morning in the court of the Louvre by Bussy. The royal minions espoused the defence of Grammont; and Quélus proposed that a general encounter between the chamberlains and adherents of the king and those of Monsieur should ensue. Three hundred champions on either side accepted the challenge thus to vindicate their frivolous quarrels. The place of combat was agreed upon; but before the en-

[1] Jean Louis Nogaret de la Valette, after the flight of the king of Navarre, entered the service of Monsieur, and joined him at Moulins.

counter came off, it was interdicted by the king. The same evening, nevertheless, the house in which Bussy lodged was stormed by M. de Quélus and a band of gentlemen, when several persons were mortally wounded; and serious consequences must have ensued, but for the interposition of the maréchal de Montmorency, who promptly called out the royal guard and suppressed the tumult.[1] The duc d'Anjou, meantime, testified extreme resentment at the encouragement given by the king to these attempts to slay Bussy; and declared to Catherine that, as his residence at the court under such circumstances was hurtful to his honour, he should take the first opportunity of departing. Yet Monsieur took no measures to check the insolent bravadoes of his own favourite; nor would he be persuaded, as his mother suggested, to dispense with Bussy's attendance. The latter offered most provoking defiance to his foes, "drawing his sword," says a chronicler, "if the wind blew a blade of straw across his path." One evening, however, as Bussy was returning from exercising a horse appertaining to Monsieur, in the court-yard of the Tuileries, he was set upon by Quélus, St. Luc, d'Arques, and St. Megrin with swords. Bussy repelled this cowardly attack with the courage of a hero; a hot skirmish ensued, in which one gentleman, a friend of Bussy, who happened to come up during the fray, was mortally wounded. Bussy, being on horseback, at length escaped from his assailants; and riding straight to the Louvre, entered the apartment of Monsieur, and detailed the enterprise. It is recorded that Monsieur stamped with fury, and ran to the royal apartment to demand vengeance on Bussy's assailants, or vowing that he himself would extort it. The king, suddenly roused from slumber, sent in great alarm for his mother, and

[1] Relazione de Girolamo Lippomano, Ambasciatore in Francia, 1577. Journal de Henri III.

for Cheverny, Birague, and Villequier. The duke, notwithstanding the efforts made to pacify his wrath by all these personages, still steadily demanding the punishment of the aggressors, it was resolved to arrest Quélus, the leader of the outrage. The warrant to that effect was signed by Henry; but the following morning, before his majesty left his bed, he cancelled the order, and Quélus appeared as usual at the court reception. The following day the marriage of M. de St. Luc with the heiress of Brissac was to be performed; but as both Monsieur and queen Marguerite angrily declined to attend the espousals, Catherine, deeming it prudent to conceal the dissensions between her children from the public eye, carried off the duke and his sister to dine privately at Vincennes.

As it was the custom of the king to bestow the hand of the most wealthy heiresses in the realm upon his favourites, the marriage between St. Luc and Jeanne de Cossé excited little surprise. Mademoiselle de Brissac, though plain in person and slightly deformed, was a woman of high principle and some talent. Her union with the king's dissipated favourite was contracted, as may be supposed, in defiance of her protests and entreaties. St. Luc, however, admired the genius of his wife, and respected the dignity of her deportment; and when, soon after her marriage, madame de St. Luc became the chosen friend of queen Louise, the harmony between the illustrious pair suffered little outward interruption. Henry presented the bride with a costly string of pearls appertaining to the crown jewels of France. These pearls had formed part of the dowry of Catherine de Medici; and the queen had presented a similar string as her nuptial gift to Mary Stuart, on the marriage of the latter with Francis II.

Catherine, meanwhile, returned to Paris at nightfall from Vincennes with her son and daughter, to honour

the bridal pair with her presence at the ball given by the king. So effectual had been the queen's remonstrances to Monsieur during their afternoon promenade, upon the impolicy of giving mortal offence to his brother and king for so unworthy a personage as Bussy d'Amboise, that the duke suffered himself to be persuaded to attend his mother to the Louvre; and even consented to congratulate the newly-married couple. Marguerite, however, refused to follow her brother's example; and, greatly to her mother's indignation, she conjured Monsieur to act consistently and in accord with his previous declarations. The duke, however, went to the ball, which was holden in the great hall of the Louvre. The insolent favourites began to laugh and make signs, the one to the other, when they perceived the approach of "*le Bossu,*" as in their ribald mirth they often presumed to term the brother of their sovereign. Monsieur advanced to the bride, and was in the act of addressing her, when M. de Maugiron, the bosom friend of Quélus, approached, and after some preliminary banter, sneeringly said, "Monseigneur, your present very sumptuous array has been a useless trouble; we have none of us previously missed your royal highness. We suppose, however, that you have chosen this evening hour for your *début* as being most propitious to your personal presence!" The duke was observed to turn very pale; he glanced towards the king, who was dancing with madame de Nevers, then he whispered a few words in the ear of M. de la Châtre, and quitted the saloon. His menacing looks alarmed the favourites, who, surrounding their royal master, clamorously told what had occurred. Henry jested, but instantly apprized his mother. Catherine's first measure was to put an end to the ball. Their majesties had scarcely retired when Villequier entered the apartment in great agitation, and warned the king that Monsieur was preparing to leave

the capital that very night. The king, accompanied by his mother, by queen Louise, and by the duc de Lorraine, who had arrived to spend the carnival with his kindred in France, therefore at once, and without ceremony, proceeded to the apartment of Monsieur. They found him sitting gloomily on the edge of his bed, pulling on his boots, evidently preparatory to a flight. The room and the adjacent chambers were filled with gentlemen, all talking loudly, and busy in preparations for their master's departure. Bussy, however, being within the duke's private cabinet, did not appear before their majesties. Henry sat down by his brother, and expressed his regret at the occurrences which had so offended Monsieur, and proposed "that the fiery young cavaliers in their respective suites should vindicate their disputes by a combat." He graciously represented that it was needless they should quarrel, for that Monsieur was his only brother and heir-presumptive, and therefore that the troubles of France could alone be renewed to his disadvantage; that a rupture between them would only do harm, by disgusting all loyal subjects and giving courage to the evil-disposed. The two queens entreated the duke, "*l'enfant gâté de la maison,*" not to drive them to despair by persisting in so ruinous a determination. Monsieur made only sullen replies to these expostulations, but ended by promising to take no final decision for that night.[1]

The following morning, accordingly, Monsieur preferred a formal demand that redress should be made him for the insults he had endured from the *mignons* of the king; and from his majesty's ministers Cheverny and Birague. Henry made some temporizing reply: but so palpable was his disinclination to satisfy the duke, that Monsieur presented himself at the

[1] Relazione de Girolamo Lippomano, ambasciatore nell' anno 1577. Davila, vi.

coucher of the queen-mother, and dejectedly requested, at any rate, that permission should be granted him to pass a few days at St. Germain, to recruit his spirits by the diversion of the chase. Catherine agreed, and sent Villequier to the king to inform his majesty of the permission she had given. Henry at first negligently confirmed his mother's promise; but, after a private conference with Maugiron, Quélus, and St. Luc, his majesty's became highly excited, and vowed that, as his brother's design was undoubtedly hostile, he should not quit the Louvre. A great part of the night in the royal apartment was spent in agitating conference. About three o'clock, therefore, the king ascended to the chamber of the queen-mother: every door being unhesitatingly opened at his majesty's peremptory summons, Henry himself drew back the curtain of his mother's bed, and roused her from slumber. "How, madame, is it possible that you have asked me to allow my brother to leave Paris? Do you not perceive the dangers which menace my realm? Doubtless this fine hunt covers some dangerous enterprise. Madame, he shall not go! I am this instant going myself to arrest him!" Catherine, astonished at the sudden intrusion into her apartment, immediately rose, and summoning her women, she threw on a *robe-de-chambre*, and followed her son, who had quitted the room without waiting for a reply. In the corridor she met M. de Losses and a company of archers of the Scotch guard. Henry hurriedly traversed the gallery; he stopped before the door of the duke's apartment, and knocked. "Open, it is I, the king," exclaimed his majesty. The door being immediately opened by Cangé, the duke's valet, the king, beside himself with anger, rushed to his brother's bedside, and roughly shook him by the shoulder, "Will you never cease to trouble me and my realm? I will teach you the consequences of

playing the traitor to your king!" said Henry. He then commanded the archers to carry into the corridor all the coffers, drawers, and boxes in the apartment, and search them, retaining all written documents. Henry then compelled his brother to rise, while, with his own royal hands, he searched the bed. It happened that the same evening Monsieur had received a billet from madame de Sauve, which he had deposited beneath his pillow. This letter Monsieur firmly refused to relinquish, closing his hand over it. The king furiously commanded him to deliver up the paper, believing that at length he should thus become possessed of written testimony confirmatory of his brother's treason. Monsieur resisted as long as he was able; and at length, when guards entered the chamber to wrest the document from him, he gave the letter to Catherine, who perused it in silence, and then handed it to her son.[1] The search in the corridor, meanwhile, proceeded; but nothing was found in Monsieur's coffers to furnish the smallest clue to his ultimate designs. Henry, then, ashamed of his violence, required that Monsieur should give his solemn promise not to quit Paris. The duke refused; and sullenly declined to reply to any questions. "Since you are, then, resolved to depart, go, if you can!"[2] exclaimed Henry, at length, menacingly. Then, calling M. de Losses, he commanded him to consider the duc d'Anjou as under arrest, and to prevent him from setting foot outside his apartment. Catherine in vain offered herself to guard her son until the morning; but the king, taking his mother's hand, led her back to her apartment, and refused to listen to a single expostulation. Henry returned in triumph to his apartment, to detail to his favourites his puerile

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. Lippomano. Journal de Henri III.

[2] "Si adunque voi volete partire, partite si potete!"—Lippomano: Relazione.

achievement. Warrants were then expedited for the arrest and committal to the Bastille of la Châtre, Simier, and Bussy d'Amboise, the most obnoxious of the duke's followers, under pretence that they had planned and connived at the contemplated treason of their royal master. The king desired that Bussy should be conducted into his presence: soldiers, therefore, were sent in quest of the unlucky favourite, whom they found in Monsieur's cabinet, hidden between two mattresses.[1] The intrepid spirit of Bussy sank, it is said, before the peril which menaced him; for it seems he deemed his death to be inevitable. He asked his majesty whether it was his royal will that his head should fall, or that he should ask pardon of M. de Quélus? Henry gave him a severe reprimand for his past delinquencies, telling Bussy that his fate depended on the conduct of Monsieur. With edifying attention Bussy listened to the royal harangue, professed penitence for his past enormities, and was conducted from the presence to a chamber in the house of the governor of the Bastille.[2]

The duc d'Anjou, meanwhile, when the day dawned, prevailed upon M. de Losses to carry a message to his sister Marguerite, apprizing her of the events of the night. The queen listened with indignation to the recital, and in her turn despatched de Losses to demand permission to share the imprisonment of her beloved brother. With an ironical jest, and an abominable insinuation, Henry sent his sister the licence which she requested. Marguerite, therefore, arrayed herself in mourning garments, and throwing a veil over her head, proceeded to visit Monsieur. The brother and sister

1 "Fu trovato che Bussi era celato tra il pagliazzo e la trapunta del letto...E menato innanzi al ré pieno di spavento di morire, piuttosto che certo della qualità della morte," &c.—Lippomano.

2 Journal de Henri III.

wept in each other's arms, vowing to participate in a common fate. During this interval Catherine, seriously alarmed at the precipitate and unnecessary measure into which her son had been betrayed, summoned Cheverny, Birague, the duc de Nevers, and the maréchals de Cossé and Montmorency, and confided to them the arrest of the heir-presumptive. The consternation of these noblemen was extreme, especially when they were, moreover, informed by the queen that the king possessed not a tittle of evidence against the duke to justify so harsh a measure. After some debate, therefore, they proceeded, accompanied by Catherine, to expostulate with their weak sovereign; and to conjure his majesty to leave the matter in the hands of the queen-mother, who, with her accustomed dexterity, they declared would discover a remedy to heal the wound inflicted on the duke's *amour-propre* and dignity. Henry was now heartily ashamed of the *fracas*. As the consequences of the act became developed, Henry's counsellors of the preceding night disowned all responsibility; protesting that they had only obeyed his majesty's will, and were far from having presumed to suggest to their sovereign his conduct towards his only brother. Villequier retired betimes to the Hôtel de Ville, after entertaining his royal master with a mimic rehearsal of the scene of the preceding night; as, with all his alleged refinement, the favourite was an accomplished buffoon. Quélus and St. Luc assumed an attitude of humble deprecation, and entreated that their lives and the life of Bussy d'Amboise might be offered as a peace-offering to allay the animosity kindled between the king and Monsieur. The trepidation of Henry greatly augmented, when informed of the steps taken by his sister Marguerite, and that she was actually gone to share the prison of her brother. In his frequent disputes with Marguerite, the king felt an un-

pleasant conviction that the duc de Guise became more or less implicated in their altercation, he being perfectly well informed of its most salient points, and that without any perceptible understanding with the queen of Navarre. His brother's resentment, Henry further foresaw, might probably renew the civil warfare, and draw down upon France the wrath of Elizabeth queen of England. When Catherine and the council entered the presence-chamber, therefore, she found the king in the most accommodating condition of mind, lamenting the desertion of his favourites, and the severity with which his consort queen Louise had thought proper to comment on the violence of his proceedings. Catherine instantly perceived that the affair would be adjusted at her dictation. She commenced by insisting that MM. de Quélus and de Maugiron should be compelled to offer Monsieur a humble apology for their past insolence and misconduct. Henry reluctantly granted this demand. Quélus was summoned; and the apology he was expected to make was dictated on the spot by the queen, and placed in his hands, with the notification that arrest and the Bastille were its alternatives. Warrants were next despatched liberating the captives of the Bastille; who, therefore, tasted prison fare only for the period of four hours. De Losses and his Scotch guards were dismissed from the palace. The queen then proceeded to visit Monsieur, after enjoining the king to present himself with the cavaliers of his band in her saloon at the usual hour.

Monsieur and his sister were solacing their grief together when their mother entered. The duke rose and bowed, and Marguerite curtseyed. They then continued to stand with sullen and haughty mien. "Mon fils," began Catherine, "it is your duty to return thanks to Almighty God, who has rescued you from a peril greater than I can describe. At one

time, my son, I despaired of saving your life. You know the king your brother, and that his temper is such that he not only resents deeds, but even what he has reason to suspect may be in your thoughts. His majesty, when under such excitement, attends not to my counsel, but blindly pursues his will. This morning the king seems to have forgotten the past. I come, therefore, to invite you to present yourself before his majesty, and to imitate his example." Monsieur replied by declining to quit his prison, unless reparation for the insult was given by his majesty, with the chastisement of his enemies. The queen then informed Monsieur of the steps she had taken to preserve his honour. She implored him to yield in this affair to her guidance, and to reconcile himself to the king. The duke at length assented; but in so ungracious a tone, that the queen, addressing her daughter, intimated that she should hold Marguerite responsible for her brother's obedience.

The same afternoon, when the court assembled in Catherine's saloon, the king despatched the governor of Paris, M. de Villequier, to request the presence of Monsieur and that of her majesty of Navarre. The duke entered leading Marguerite, who still wore the mourning robe she had assumed to share her brother's captivity. Henry with ready dissimulation advanced and embraced his brother. "Monseigneur, believe that zeal for my realm occasioned my proceedings last night towards your highness, and that I am guiltless of any intent to offend or annoy you." The duke returned his brother's embrace, and sneeringly assured his majesty "that he could never take offence at any act which it should please him to perpetrate." Henry then commanded that M. de Quélus should approach, and humble himself at the feet of Monsieur. Quélus advanced; and, with the air of one enacting a jest, knelt

and read in lisping accent the apology dictated by Catherine. Bussy was next introduced, and at the command of their majesties the two antagonists embraced[1] and promised to live for the future in amity. Henry and Catherine, therefore, for the first time addressed Marguerite, who had remained a silent and sarcastic spectator of the scene. "Madame," said the king, "it is to you that I am willing to owe that our brother may preserve no resentment likely to cause him to forget the obedience which he owes to his king." Marguerite curtly replied, "that she believed Monsieur to be so good a subject that no admonition would be requisite."[2] This eventful day ended with a ball given by Catherine at the Tuileries. The duke, nevertheless, bitterly resented the insult which he had received, and secretly persevered in his design of quitting the court.

A few hours after his reconciliation with Quélus, Bussy d'Amboise, on a hint from the queen-mother, quitted Paris; a departure which did not sooth the irritated feelings of Monsieur. The arrest of the duke had been effected on the evening of Shrove Tuesday; the following day he accompanied the king on his pilgrimages to the shrines and in a procession of penitents, which his majesty in person led through the streets of Paris. Whenever the duke appeared he had to run the gauntlet of the sharp wit of Henry's favourites, who thus sought to avenge the humiliation of their leader Quélus. At the king's *lever* on the morning of Thursday, the 13th, the petulant retorts made by

[1] "Sire," said Bussy, "s'il vous plait que je le baise, j'y suis tout disposé; et accommodant ses gestes avec les paroles luy fit une embrassade à la Pentalone, de quoi toute la compagnie ne se peut empêcher de rire."—Mém. de Marguerite de Valois.

[2] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite: "Je leur reponds, que mon frère étoit si prudent, et avoit tant de dévotion à son service, qu'il n'avoit besoin d'y être sollicité ni par moy, ni par autre."—Dupleix.

M. d'Anjou were repeated to the king; also that the latter had been heard to avow it was still his intention to leave the court. This intelligence kindled renewed panic in the royal mind; and, without consulting Catherine, Henry sent again for de Losses, captain of his guard, and commanded that Monsieur should be detained if he attempted to leave the Louvre after dusk. An order was also issued directing that every member of the duke's household not required to officiate at his *coucher*, should nightly quit the palace. This arbitrary mandate added the last fraction to the discomfiture of M. d'Anjou; he determined upon flight, and, in concert with his sister Marguerite, the duke resolved on a scheme for immediate evasion. It appears that his first impulse was to flee and cast himself at the feet of queen Elizabeth, with whom he continued to carry on an exemplary correspondence; but the coldness with which the English ambassador received an intimation to that effect from the queen of Navarre, convinced Monsieur that his suit would best prosper while the ocean separated him from the realm of England. At length the town of Angers was selected for the place of Monsieur's refuge, Simier, the duke's aide-de-camp, being alone intrusted with the important secret. The queen of Navarre undertook the conduct of the plot, and fixed its execution for the evening of Friday, February 14th, three days after the duke's arrest; for Marguerite sagely observed, "that more than one promising enterprise had failed, owing to excessive caution and dilatory delays."

The mandate issued by the king prohibiting his brother from quitting the Louvre after dark hour, rendered it too hazardous for Monsieur to attempt to pass the sentinels on guard. Marguerite, therefore, boldly proposed that Monsieur should descend by means of a rope from the window of her bedchamber into the

dry fosse below. She further devised means to communicate with Bussy, who still retained his place in the good graces of the queen; and directed him to repair secretly on the night of the 14th to the abbey of Ste. Géneviève, and there await his master. The abbot de Ste. Géneviève, a partisan and firm friend of the duke, had acceded to this measure proposed to him by Marguerite, on condition that, if Monsieur accomplished his flight, he might apparently redeem his faith to the king by being the first to notify the event within half an hour of the duke's evasion. A part of the abbey being built on the city wall, offered every facility for Monsieur's evasion. Marguerite then commenced to enact her own *rôle* within the palace with consummate art. Early on the morning of the appointed day she despatched one of her pages to a *tapissier*, who was ready to obey the instructions of his patroness without comment or inquiry, with the frame of the folding-bed of one of her women, under pretext that its cord and sacking had suddenly given way during the night, and needed repair. By this means the queen obtained a length of rope sufficient for the descent of Monsieur into the fosse without exciting the slightest suspicion. The queen, as the hour approached, arrayed herself with splendour, and proceeded to sup with queen Catherine. The day being a fast, and, moreover, the first Friday in Lent, had been kept by king Henry with more than usual austerity; and while Marguerite plotted the subversion of the policy of the cabinet, his majesty was on his knees before the porphyry shrine of the chapel de Bourbon, performing penance. At the door of the banqueting-hall the queen of Navarre met her brother d'Anjou. The duke's manner was hurried and nervous; and, instead of composedly partaking of the meal with his mother, as had been agreed, Monsieur, unable to bear Catherine's penetrating gaze, rose, and,

under pretence of illness, precipitately quitted the apartment. As he passed, Monsieur whispered an entreaty to his sister that she would also hasten to retire. The cowardice of the duke and his want of self-command nearly frustrated the design, and exposed the queen of Navarre to imminent peril. A princess less astute would have betrayed all.

Marguerite, nevertheless, advanced with smiling countenance, and conversed so brilliantly during the repast, that Catherine forgot her son's confused deportment. Behind the chair of the queen-mother, however, stood her chevalier d'honneur, Matignon, "a Norman, keen and cunning," as Marguerite terms him. As the queen rose from table, Matignon said something in her majesty's ear; but in so sharp a whisper, that Marguerite overheard these words: "Madame, be assured the duke meditates flight. See to it betimes." Catherine changed colour; she then beckoned to the queen of Navarre to follow her. The queen entered her cabinet. "You heard what Matignon just now said?" demanded her majesty of her daughter. "It was doubtless something, madame, of importance, as it causes you perceptible disquietude," undauntedly responded Marguerite. "It is true: you are aware, *ma fille,* that I am responsible to the king for your brother's presence. Well, Matignon tells me that to-morrow he will no longer be in this city." The queen of Navarre replied with a presence of mind more ingenious than commendable, that "she was aware of the enmity borne by Matignon towards her brother; that when Monsieur quitted the court, undoubtedly the design would not be concealed from herself; and that she was willing to give her life as a hostage for the person of the duke." Catherine sternly surveyed her daughter's countenance. She then made a peremptory sign of dismissal, saying, "Heed well what you have just said, my daughter. You

shall be your brother's surety: if he escapes, mark well, madame, you answer for it with your life!" Marguerite upon this calmly retired to her chamber, and after submitting to the ceremonial of her *coucher*, dismissed her ladies, and remained alone with three trusty waiting-women, to whom she had confided the projected enterprise. Presently a low knock at the door announced the arrival of the duke. The queen herself admitted her brother, who was followed by Simier and by his valet Cangé. Monsieur was pale and depressed; and but for the admonitions of his sister, would have abandoned the enterprise. Marguerite's hatred of the king was unquenchable; he had deliberately blighted her reputation, and she had vowed that the crown, once so coveted, should be worn by him amid disquietude and foreboding. Henry even found in his sister a Nemesis—a woman fair, alluring, and brilliant, the object of whose life it was to thwart his designs. He beheld her the consort of his opponent Henri de Navarre, and queen of the French Calvinists—the *confidente* of his hereditary foe Guise—the cherished sister and faithful ally of his brother and rival d'Anjou —and the accomplished coquette whose favours seduced both Huguenot and Catholic, loyal or malcontent. Under every aspect Henry beheld his sister his enemy; yet, with a persistency perfectly unaccountable, he forbade her departure from the court.

Monsieur's fast ebbing courage having been rallied by the courageous exhortations of his sister, Marguerite with her own hands lowered the rope by which her brother was to descend into the moat from the window of her apartment. The cord had been previously made fast to a stout bar of wood, which Marguerite's women and Simier contrived to wedge firmly within the embrasure of the casement. The queen without further parley desired her brother to descend; and, aided by her wo-

men, she steadily held the rope whilst he accomplished his descent. The duke, according to Marguerite, demeaned himself valiantly at this juncture, "*riant et gaussant sans avoir aucune apprehension;*" and presenting a flattering contrast to his chamberlain Simier, who shivered with fright lest the enterprise should be discovered by the palace-guard. Cangé, the duke's valet, was the last to escape. As he set his foot on the ground, a man, who had been concealed in the shadow cast by the palace-walls, sprang forward, and after taking a survey of the scene, made off rapidly towards the guard-house. The duke and his companions then flying, as they believed, for their lives, reached Ste Géneviève in safety. At the portal Monsieur was greeted by his faithful Bussy, who led his master to a spot where the abbey wall might be scaled with facility. Without Bussy had provided horses; and in a hamlet a few leagues distant a small troop of adherents were waiting to escort the duke. Other narrators of this, the duke's second flight, record that Monsieur made his exit into the open country through a hole bored in the wall by the enterprising Bussy, who had seized the abbot and confined him in a cell until after Monsieur's departure; and such was the confession made by the abbot, when he appeared in the middle of the night at the Louvre to reveal to the king the escape of the heir-presumptive.

The sudden apparition of the unknown individual from the moat had occasioned extreme terror to Marguerite and her faithful tiring-women. The queen believing that Matignon's enmity to Monsieur had caused him to set a watch over the duke's actions throughout that eventful night, gave up all for lost. Marguerite, therefore, threw herself despairingly on her bed, anticipating the extreme wrath of her mother and the king; and expecting immediate arrest. Her

women, meantime, drew up the cord and cast it on a fire blazing on the hearth; they then closed the window, and also simulated sleep. A suspense of some twenty minutes ensued. A great commotion in the outer corridor then became audible; and a volley of blows was showered on the door of the queen's apartment, while a voice summoned the inmates to give instant admittance. The peril of her position roused again the energies of the queen; a glance at the hearth showed her that the rope was but half consumed—an evidence more positive of her participation in the flight of the duc d'Anjou even the king could not desire. Marguerite accordingly commanded her trembling attendants to demand the errand of the archers without opening the door. They replied "that flames were issuing from the chimney of the apartment of the queen of Navarre, and that they had hastened to extinguish the fire." The flame arising from the rope, which the women in their terror had so heedlessly thrown on the fire, was issuing from the top of the chimney. The archers were thereupon dismissed by the bedchamber women with the assurance that the fire could easily be quenched by the *garçon de chambre* without aid; for that they dare not open the door as their royal mistress was asleep. Marguerite greatly relieved, and hoping that Monsieur's evasion had not transpired, prepared to take repose. The catastrophe, however, was only postponed. About two o'clock in the morning Marguerite's door was again assailed—this time, however, more courteously, by M. de Losses, captain of the royal guard, with a detachment of eight men. A summons to open, *de par le Roy*, again fell on the ears of the trembling listeners. De Losses, leaving his men at the door, entered the apartment, and unceremoniously drawing the curtain of the queen's bed, announced that he had been sent to conduct her into the presence of

the king, who on the confession of the abbot de St. Géneviève was apprized of Monsieur's flight. Marguerite arose, and throwing on a *manteau-de-nuit* prepared to obey the summons, her courage being completely restored on learning that the duc d'Anjou was beyond the power of his enemies—an event which, she knew, would compel the king to dissemble his resentment. As the queen was quitting her chamber, one of her women threw herself before Marguerite, and clinging to her robe sobbed forth, "that she should never see her mistress more!" De Losses sternly commanded the woman to rise; and turning to Marguerite, he significantly observed, "Madame, that woman would have ruined you, had I been your enemy. Fear nothing, however, you are safe, for your brother has escaped!"

Marguerite made no reply, but passed from her apartments escorted by the guard to the chamber of queen Catherine. De Losses opened the door, and directed the queen of Navarre to enter. Catherine lay in her bed weeping: at her pillow sat the king—his countenance agitated and wrathful. On perceiving his sister, Henry advanced towards her, making a menacing gesture; but at the entreaty of the queen his mother, however, he resumed his seat. "Madame," said Catherine, "did you not assure me a few hours ago that your brother had no intention of departing?" The self-possession of the queen of Navarre was now completely restored: she perceived that both the king and his mother were ignorant of the aid which she had afforded Monsieur; and that the means which he had adopted to escape from the Louvre was still with them a subject of conjecture. Assuming the utmost innocence of demeanour Marguerite, feigning amazement, boldly said, "Madame, I did so promise; but, like your majesties, I have been deceived. Nevertheless, I still venture to stake my life that the departure of M.

d'Anjou will not inconvenience the government. He has, doubtless, retired only within his own dependencies to prepare for a campaign in Flanders, the which he had resolved upon." After a further colloquy with the king, during which his majesty elicited nothing, Marguerite was dismissed again to her chamber by Catherine, more resolute than ever in her projects of opposition by the violence of Henry's language and demeanour.[1]

It is difficult to analyse the precise motives which influenced the conduct of the queen of Navarre at this juncture. The fact is certain that she did all in her power to promote strife between the king and the duc d'Anjou. Monsieur's anger, resolution, and resources were sustained by his sister Marguerite. The queen seems to have aimed at the renewal of the war; yet by the convention of Beaulieu the duc d'Anjou was endowed with the richest of the midland provinces of France—a donation neither diminished nor repealed by the subsequent edict of Poitiers; while that edict had recently confirmed again the possession of peace, liberty, and semi-toleration in religious matters to the king of Navarre. The outbreak of war, therefore, in all probability would have deprived those whose interests were most interwoven with her own of these advantages; as it had been the usual practice hitherto at the commencement of a fresh campaign to annul all edicts favourable to infractors of the public tranquillity. The party of the League alone protested against the enactments of Henry's edict of Poitiers; its chieftain Guise entertained secret and confidential relations with the queen of Navarre. In their hatred of the king Marguerite and her *quondam* lover met on common ground: from this point, however, widely did their aims diverge.

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. Dupleix: Hist. de France. The historian was maître des requêtes to queen Marguerite.

Marguerite, vindictive and unscrupulous, sought merely to avenge countless insults, and to elevate one brother by the downfall of the other, her persecutor; Guise aimed at the dictatorship of France and at supreme power over affairs secular and ecclesiastical, by the humiliation of the royal race. Subsequently, indeed, the ambition of the house of Lorraine took grander flight; but not until after the queen-mother herself had ventured the perilous suggestion, of substituting on the throne of France the lineage of Lorraine for the royal descendants of St. Louis, did Guise presume to raise his glance to the diadem. At this period it is more than possible that the influence of the duc de Guise was insensibly at work over the mind of Marguerite, prompting her to foster the rivalry between the royal brothers—for discord was the element in which alone the principles of the League could expand or even survive. A second motive might be her desire to compel the king to aid Monsieur in reaping the fruit of the seed which she had so ably scattered during her sojourn in the Netherlands, under the potent incentive of securing thereby the peace of his own realm. Moreover, Marguerite's hatred of M. de Quélus surpassed even the enmity she had borne towards the marquis du Guast; and she left no means untried to compass his downfall. With her husband the queen of Navarre maintained an active correspondence. Henry held his court at the castle of Nérac; and madame Catherine his sister presided over the festivities which ever followed in the train of the pleasure-loving prince. The most distinguished cavaliers of the court of Navarre were the comte de Soissons brother of Condé, and the vicomte de Turenne, who at this period were both rival suitors for the hand of the princess of Navarre, and divided the little court by their cabals and contentions. Many and frequent were the demands made by the

king of Navarre that his wife might be permitted to rejoin him; all which petitions Marguerite had clamorously seconded. Whether Henri's *empressement* arose from a tender recollection of Marguerite's charms, or as a matter of policy and self-assertion against the arbitrary separation decreed by Henry, it were difficult to divine. The queen of Navarre, nevertheless, made this refusal of her brother to permit her departure the foundation of her openly alleged grievances; but that the pretext was fictitious is sufficiently demonstrated by the intimacy of her *liaisons* with the duc de Guise, and with Bussy and Harlay de Chanvallon, and other cavaliers of Monsieur's band. The lovely and volatile Marguerite loved too well the gay and luxurious life of the capital, its busy intrigues, follies, and excitements, to prefer the comparatively obscure sphere of presiding over the Béarnnois court; which still treasured its reminiscences of the virtuous example and decorous life of the deceased queens Marguerite d'Angoulême and her daughter Jeanne d'Albret.

Henry was not left long to suffer from incertitude as to the sentiments and ultimate designs of the duc d'Anjou. During the course of the day following his evasion, a courier arrived in Paris bringing letters from the duke, addressed to the king, and to de Villeroy, first secretary of state. Monsieur wrote as follows to the king:—

THE DUC D'ANJOU TO HENRY III. KING OF FRANCE AND POLAND.[1]

Monseigneur,—I have never desired any earthly thing with more intensity than to acquire your favour, and therefore have I sought it with humility and by obedience minute and unquestioned, trusting that at last I might attain the esteem and love

[1] MSS. Bibl. Imp. de l'Abbaye Royale de St. Germain des Prez; MSS. de Seguier, fol. 71.

that nature prescribes as due to the fraternal bond, and which no consideration ought to supersede. It has been my misfortune never to attain this position; for, instead of holding the first rank about your person, yielding to no one in authority, privilege, or familiarity, I have been so degraded by the pernicious counsels of the ministers around your majesty, that they have deprived me of your favour: and, moreover, have driven from your court your most faithful servants, governors of provinces, and others—men wise and competent. These said persons, sire, desire to possess themselves of your realm and of your person, in order that by oppressive and illegal methods they may sully the majesty of your diadem. The way they adopt to achieve this evil thing is to drive the wisest and most illustrious from your court, that at leisure they may devour the remnant of prosperity which remains to your poor people, by the shameful and arbitrary imposition of taxes and subsidies, to squander upon their own sumptuous and extravagant attire, and other lavish expenditures. These personages, sire, having forgotten decency and prudence in their voluptuous pleasures, imagine themselves to be the equals of kings and princes; nay, they even surpass us in superb and intolerable luxury. They so influence you that they have presumed to deprive me of your affection—a boon that I prized beyond measure. They have converted your fraternal affection into rancorous hate. You, sire, therefore, having wickedly abandoned yourself to their insatiable malice, and unhallowed covetousness, permitted that my faithful servants should be by them impudently assailed in the presence of your court, and at the very portals of your palace arrested, assassinated, and persecuted without a possibility of redress. Instead of referring this outrage to the investigation of the parliament established by your predecessors, for the punishment and repression of such insolence, your majesty condescended to lend your palace for the solemnity of the nuptials of one of the chief aggressors; nor was your royal indignation excited when another of them had the hardihood to say to me that he would take the life of my servant, even did he seek safety within my arms; with other threats of similar import. Within three days of this last occurrence, these same individuals induced your majesty to arrest me as a criminal guilty of high treason. They also caused Bussy to be imprisoned in your palace, and la Châtre in the Bastille—an indignity not to be tolerated by valiant and true-hearted men, who have never given your majesty cause to inflict upon them such contumely. For these causes, therefore, I have determined no longer to imperil my own freedom, but to rescue myself from servitude by absence—having been informed that my enemies were plotting to achieve my incarceration four days hence

in the Bastille, pending other measures after the fashion of Cæsar Borgia to rid themselves of my presence. I demand, therefore, nothing from your majesty, nor from this realm, other than permission to spend my days in security and repose; and I humbly pray that you will tender me such assurances, with every guarantee which a prince of my lineage may justly demand.

I pray God, sire, to have you in His holy keeping.

Your humble brother,

François.

To Villeroy the duke vouchsafed a more explicit statement of his grievances and future intentions. He commences his relation from the visit which he paid to Henry when at Olinville, before the meeting of the States at Blois, and fills a letter of seven pages with a recital of the various indignities inflicted on him by the king and his minions.[1] The tone of Monsieur's complaint is so puerile and querulous that to sympathize in his wrongs is difficult. In all his letters the duke explicitly stated that it was not his intention to raise troubles in the kingdom; nevertheless, on his arrival at Angers, the duke thought proper to despatch a gentleman to demand the cession of four strongholds in Normandy, as a further guarantee of the king's pacific intents. The messenger at the same time brought intelligence of the insurrection of a district of the province of Bretagne, which had resisted the levy of some new imposts. This information greatly alarmed the cabinet; and by the counsel of Cheverny, the duc de Montpensier was despatched into Bretagne; while Catherine announced her intention to visit the duc d'Anjou, and, by the power of her expostulations, to induce him to return to court. The absence of Monsieur, moreover, had produced an unpleasant misgiving in the mind of the Spanish ambassador, who waited on

[1] Le duc d'Alençon (d'Anjou) à M. de Villeroy. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Colbert, tome i. p. 164; also Fontanieu, 350 and 351, MSS. 1578.

the king to protest betimes against the probable tampering of the duc d'Anjou with Lalain and the faction of the States of Flanders. To obviate, as far as possible, the evil consequences of the duke's flight, Henry issued letters confirmatory of the concessions made in his edict of Poitiers; he remitted certain imposts which had caused vexatious tumults in the province of Burgundy; he addressed conciliatory letters to Damville and to the king of Navarre; and forwarded instructions to the duc de Montpensier to proceed with every possible indulgence in the suppression of the insurrection in Bretagne. Henry also wrote to his ambassador in England. He commanded Castelnau to inform queen Elizabeth that there existed no hostility between himself and his brother, whose designs, he was now assured, were pacific, and whom he regarded with the consideration due to a son—heir of the realm. He announced the intended journey of his mother to Angers, whose visit to the duke, his majesty stated, had rather a private object than one important to the welfare of Europe.

Catherine commenced her journey to Angers about the 18th day of February. Her departure rendered the position of the queen of Navarre still more difficult and irksome. Since the night of the flight of the duc d'Anjou, Marguerite and her brother the king had never met in private; and even Catherine herself could scarcely be prevailed upon to treat her daughter with courtesy, so assured was her majesty that the queen of Navarre had been implicated in that untoward event. Marguerite, however, joyous and *insouciante* as ever, easily consoled herself for her temporary eclipse. Her visits to the hôtel de Nevers, where the duc de Guise paid frequent devoirs to his sister-in-law, and to her private house in an obscure street of Paris, the Rue Quinquempoix, were only the more frequent. The duc

d'Anjou, duly informed by his sister of the doings in the Louvre, was much disconcerted at the approaching arrival of his mother. Having already obtained in appanages a large section of the realm by his former alliance with the malcontents, the duke's designs were now concentrated on the extension of his relations with Lalain and the confederates of the Low Countries; and, on obtaining the fruition of the long pending negotiation, to secure the crown matrimonial of England. In the hope of arresting his mother's journey, Monsieur again addressed letters to the king, filled with professions of fidelity to his government; assuring his majesty that he had neither desire nor intention to treat either with Damville and Les Politiques, with Henri de Navarre and the Calvinists, or with Guise and the League. He also wrote similar assurances to the queen of England, the Venetian ambassador, Lippomano, and to the pope. Catherine, however, was already on her road to Angers, where she arrived about the 25th day of February. Monsieur sent Bussy to meet her majesty nine miles from Angers; la Châtre also greeted the queen. Surprised at not receiving the personal homage of her son, Catherine asked where Monseigneur was? Bussy carelessly replied that he was sick, and could not leave the citadel. The angry perplexity of the queen was extreme. On her arrival in Angers she refused to enter the castle, but proceeded to the episcopal palace. A day elapsed, and still the duke took no notice of his mother's presence. Catherine then prepared to visit her son in his apartment, resolved that his alleged sickness should not divert her from obtaining the pledges which she had journeyed expressly to exact. The castle of Angers is built on the summit of a steep rock, rising perpendicularly from the bank of the river Mayenne. The fortress was anciently flanked with round towers; it was surrounded

by a deep moat excavated in the rock, and its fortifications were considered impregnable. This stronghold the resolute Catherine fearlessly invaded, unattended except by her ladies and pages. Monsieur, still persisting in simulating illness, caused himself to be carried in an arm-chair from his apartment to the portal of the castle, where he sat with his leg enveloped in bandages, as if suffering from a fracture of the limb. A conference then ensued between Catherine and her son, in which the old grounds of complaint were industriously retraced. Monsieur readily pledged himself to act a neutral part in the affairs of the realm, but showed great reserve in discussing the affairs of Flanders. He listened with imperturbable patience to his mother's objurgations on this subject, when she represented the ruinous consequences which must ensue to France, if he openly espoused the support of the rebel subjects of Philip II. The duke was, at length so wrought upon by the queen's importunity that he solemnly promised not to quit Angers without the permission of the king, except to return to Paris. Moreover, he engaged not to conclude convention whatever with the States of the Low Countries, unknown to his brother. Catherine took her departure, after having wrested from Monsieur this promise, which, strange to relate, she relied on, unadmonished by past experiences. "What more do you wish, madame? Have I not made the promises you demand?" exclaimed the duke fretfully, wearied by the queen's iteration of her request that he should escort her back to Paris. Bussy, who had been constituted governor of the castle by Monsieur, pretending to be suspicious of Catherine's designs, declined to order the gates of the fortress opening on to the drawbridge to be thrown back for her majesty's egress. The queen, therefore, with her ladies, was compelled to pass

through the small wicket; a studied slight which eventually Bussy had reason to repent.[1]

The greatest suspense, meanwhile, reigned in Paris during Catherine's absence, as none believed the peace of the realm secure so long as Monsieur remained dissatisfied and at large. The excitement was increased by the arrival of an emissary from Lalain and the States of Flanders, sent on a secret mission to the duc d'Anjou. The envoy, on learning the departure of Monsieur, refused to disclose his errand to the king, and privately withdrew. Henry spent this season of Lent in his accustomed alternations of levity and devotion. His majesty fasted with exemplary zeal, and courageously submitted himself to the discipline of his flagellants. His offerings to the various shrines of the capital were of regal magnificence. Clad in sackcloth and attended by a troop of penitents, the king visited the various churches of the capital marching barefoot. Yet the people of Paris still perversely persisted in singing, with its appropriate refrain, the doggrel commencing with the lines—

> Le roy pour avoir de l'argent
> Fait le pauvre l'indigent et l'hypocrite!

At night the king attended by his chamberlains sought diversion at the house of madame de Boullencour, where Henry often danced till midnight, with a rosary and a chaplet of death's heads pendent on one side of his girdle; while on the other he wore a profusion of small chains, from which hung either a saintly

[1] "The queen said: Que c'étoit la première fois qu'on lui avait fait passer le guichet."—Journal de Henri III. "La regina madre," says Lippomano, "il giorno medesimo seguitò sua altezza in Angiers. Con quale essendosi trattenuta qualche giorno, ed avendolo assai ben disposto, ed avutò da lui promessa che non turberebbe le cose del regno, se ne retorna a Parigi con buona speranza."

image, or a small medal representing amorous episodes. The pope, during the absence of the queen-mother, caused notification to be made to his majesty that the cardinal's hat so warmly solicited by Catherine for her trusty ally the chancellor Birague had been granted. Two other French prelates of the house of Lorraine were, moreover, elevated to the purple, Charles de Vaudemont, brother of queen Louise, and Louis de Lorraine, archbishop of Rheims, and brother of the duc de Guise. After the death of the old cardinal de Guise,[1] who was popularly termed cardinal des Bouteilles from his notorious love of strong potations, during the course of the same month, the newly-created cardinal archbishop assumed his uncle's title. Birague[2] inaugurated his accession to the ranks of the priesthood by offering a superb banquet to his royal patrons during the festival of Easter. Catherine having thus repaid the services of her protégé Birague, offered no further opposition to the elevation of the subtle Cheverny to the office of keeper of the great seal. In Cheverny the king found a minister perfectly congenial. To the most insinuating and even obsequious manners the new lord keeper added a fund of complaisance to the personal desires of his sovereign, contrasting pleasantly with the uncompromising sincerity of Villeroy, first secretary of state. Before Henry's accession to the crown of France, Cheverny possessed his confidence; as chancellor of the duchy of Anjou he had ably served his master, and had promoted in no small degree the success of Catherine's measures after the decease of Charles IX. Cheverny, though himself of illustrious lineage, paid servile homage

[1] Louis de Lorraine, son of Claude de Lorraine, duke of Guise, and of Antoinette de Bourbon. The prelate was born October 21, 1547, and died March 21, 1578. "Le cardinal ne se meloit guères d'autres affaires que celles de la cuisine."

[2] René de Birague, chancellor of France March 17, 1573, cardinal February 12, 1578. He died December 6th, 1584.

to rank. Versed in the maxims of Catherine de Medici, principle was nothing with Cheverny, expediency everything. The subserviency of the new minister and his love of popularity, which always induced him to shrink from needful measures of severity, occasioned immeasurable injury to his royal master. Finally, intimidated by the violence of faction, and having a due regard to his own fortunes, Cheverny, as the star of Guise rose in the ascendant, abandoned his master's interests, at a period when the exercise of the art of *chicane*, in which he excelled, would have effectually served the royal cause in its contest with the overwhelming power of the League.

During these transactions the envoy of the Flemish States had repaired to Angers, where he was received by the duc d'Anjou. As the queen-mother departed thence, Lalain's agent was presenting his credentials to the duke. The miserable and distracted condition of the Netherlands surpassed all that had been previously experienced by its bold and warlike people. "Never was a country more wretched and distracted than the Netherlands at this juncture," says Mezeray. "The supremacy of the archduke Matthias was acknowledged by a portion of the Flemish nobles; the prince of Orange ruled over the provinces of Friesland, Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht; Don John of Austria claimed the allegiance of the whole as Viceroy of Spain; prince Casimir represented the queen of England, while the duc d'Anjou presently appeared on the scene in the character of supreme protector and ally of the States and the people of Flanders." Count Lalain's ambassador presented the most urgent entreaty for the presence and alliance of Monsieur. The duke was implored to repair to Mons, of which place Lalain was governor, that articles of alliance might be discussed in detail. It was proposed to deliver into the hands of the duke

as guarantees, the towns of Cambray, Mons, St. Omer, and Valenciennes. The States offered to pay the troops enlisted under the banner of Monsieur; with other tempting proposals, the whole conditional, however, on the duke's immediate appearance on the scene of conflict. The substance of these proposals soon transpired, and occasioned the utmost consternation in the French, English, and Spanish cabinets. The restless ambition and vanity of the duke rendered him peculiarly liable to enter into the views of Lalain; especially when it became known that the queen of Navarre, Bussy, Simier, la Châtre, and, most significant of all, the veteran la Noue, warmly advocated an alliance which had been originally proposed by the deceased amiral de Coligny. Although the cabinets of France and England were not indisposed to afford indirect aid to the belligerents in Flanders—leaders of a revolt which checked the enterprises of the Spanish monarchy—neither Elizabeth nor Henry III. desired to be forced into hostile manifestations; nor yet to adopt the alternative—co-operation with Spain as regarded the government of the Low Countries, in case of an invasion by the duc d'Anjou. The Spanish ambassador in Paris presented threatening remonstrances, and demanded that Monsieur's acceptance of overtures from the States should be at once authoritatively forbidden on his allegiance. Catherine temporized, unwilling to offend Monsieur's susceptible pride, and promulgated an edict prohibiting the levy of troops on any pretext whatever, except for the king's service.[1] The ambassador indignantly denounced what he termed the subterfuges of the French government:—"The edict palliates the enterprise, and forbids it not. Let their majesties adopt decisive measures. Let them check

[1] Rellazioni di Lippomano è de Bentivoglio: Hist. des Pays Bas. "Li ministri Spagnuoli dicevano che questi erano remedii più tosto apparenti che essenziali:" Lippomano.

the secret levies progressing in Normandy by breaking up the roads and bridges if requisite; let them hang the captains of bands, and command the inhabitants of the provinces to cut to pieces such irregular bodies of troops," exclaimed he. The dread of intestine tumults, however, prevailed over every other consideration. Cheverny directed Catherine's attention to the empty exchequer, and to the faction of the League ready at a moment's warning to unfurl its banner, and to aid the duke in avenging his disappointment. "The king," says Lippomano, "preferred to see his neighbour's house consumed by the fire of civil commotion rather than his own." The cabinet was willing to expostulate, to threaten, and energetically to support the remonstrances of foreign powers; but the arrest of the duke, or any alliance counter to his pretensions, was skilfully evaded. Queen Elizabeth, nevertheless, sent to protest against the duke's proposed expedition; as the ardent suitor for her hand, she prayed Monsieur to reject overtures so subversive of the peace of Europe; as the sovereign of England, she intimated to Henry III. that his brother's presence in the Low Countries would probably compel her to espouse the party of Spain. Henry and Catherine immediately responded to this intimation by assurances of their extreme disapproval of the projects of Monsieur, whom they were doing all in their power to divert from the enterprise. During the months of May and June, 1578, the duc d'Anjou held a court of envoys in his town of Angers, sent by their respective sovereigns to dissuade him from the enterprise. The pope deputed the archbishop of Nazareth,[1] with whom, however, Monsieur declined to confer; the Venetian republic

[1] Fabiano Muerte Frangipani, titular bishop of Nazareth. The probable cause which induced Monsieur to refuse this prelate audience was that Henry III. objected to his residence as nuncio in the realm, his majesty resenting the recall of Jacopo Ragazzony, bishop of Parma.

despatched the subtle statesman Giovanni Michel; the duke of Savoy, the comte de Montréal; while king Henry's remonstrances afforded constant employment to the maréchal de Cossé and to M. de la Chapelle. It is astonishing that the projects of a spirit so notoriously inconstant and incapable as that of the duc d'Anjou should ever have been deemed important enough to rouse such a storm of contention and remonstrance.

On the 7th day of July, 1578, the duc d'Anjou terminated the controversy by secretly quitting Angers, accompanied by Bussy, Simier, Rocheguyon, and other cavaliers. The duke proceeded to Bapaume, and from thence to Mons, where he was magnificently received by Lalain, who on behalf of the States greeted Monsieur with the pompous title of Defender of the liberties of the Netherlanders. Shortly after his arrival the duke issued a manifesto, in which, after protesting his loyal fidelity towards France, he declared that having been summoned by the States of the Low Countries to defend them against the tyranny of Spain, he had not deemed himself at liberty to decline so glorious and meritorious a mission. The treaty between the duc d'Anjou and the States was appended. This convention had secretly received the signature of the duke, of Bussy, la Noue, and others, so early as the 4th day of April, 1578, so that all the reluctance shown by Monsieur to act in opposition to his brother's will had been a feint. It was stipulated that the duc d'Anjou should afford the army of the States of Flanders a reinforcement of 10,000 horse and of 3,000 infantry, the cost of which succour he was to defray for the period of three months. Monsieur also promised to use his influence to induce the queen of England, the king of Navarre, and the palatine Casimir to join the Flemish

league. The States, on the other hand, engaged to recognise the duke as generalissimo of their armies, and in case their emancipation from the yoke of Spain was achieved, to prefer him to any other candidate for the sovereignty of Flanders. The towns of Quesnay, Landrecy, and Bavais, were ceded as a refuge for the sick and wounded of his army; while the places previously offered were again confirmed to Monsieur.[1]

The infatuated wilfulness of the duc d'Anjou met with almost universal condemnation.[2] The Spanish ambassador, on learning the departure of Monsieur for Flanders, retired to his hôtel, and suspended relations with the government pending the arrival of instructions from Madrid; while M. de Vaulx, the envoy sent to Paris by the Flemish Viceroy Don Juan of Austria, immediately demanded his passport and prepared to quit the realm. "If his majesty does not speedily obviate these disorders, and put some constraint on the mad follies of his brother, my master will right himself at the head of a potent army, and that on the soil of France,"[3] was the envoy's menacing declaration to queen Catherine at his audience of farewell. The king, unable to conceal his chagrin and annoyance at these repeated complications, prepared to quit the capital for a sojourn at Chantilly, leaving queen Catherine installed at the Louvre to preside over affairs during his absence.

[1] The towns of Cambray, Mons, St. Omer, and Valenciennes.

[2] Hist. de M. de Thou. Mathieu. Mémoires du Duc de Nevers, tome i. "Qu'il faut lire pour apprécier parfaitement le caractère lâche et fourbe de M. d'Anjou."

[3] "Per la qual cosa vedendo monsignor di Vaulx, ambasciatore del signor Don Giovanni presso al re, di non sperar altra o poca dissimile dimostrazione, si licenziò da sua maestà protestando che quando non si remediasse da dovero a questi disordini cosi ingiusti, il signor Don Giovanni sarebbe entrato col suo esercito in Francia."—Relazione de Lippomano. Dupleix. Mathieu. Papers connected with the flight of Monseigneur d'Anjou 1578. MSS. Colbert Bibl. Imp.

Before his departure Henry despatched M. de Rambouillet and his brothers to the courts of London, Vienna, and Madrid, to express his extreme regret at the step which the duc d'Anjou had taken; "a resolve," said his majesty, "that testifies little wisdom, and which the duke himself will be presently eager to retract and deplore."

CHAPTER II.

1578—1579.

The king and queen visit Gaillon and Dieppe—Duel of MM. de Quélus and d'Entragues—Its fatal results—Despair of the king at the demise of his favourite—M. de St. Mégrin—Scandalous reports affecting the fame of the duchesse de Guise—Demeanour of the duc de Guise—Assassination of St. Mégrin—Condition of the southern provinces—Progress of queen Catherine in the south—Her interviews and negotiations with the king of Navarre and with the marshal Damville—Conferences of Nérac—Reconciliation between the king and queen of Navarre—Designs and deportment of the duc de Guise—Financial difficulties of the king—Institution of the order of St. Esprit—Splendid festivities—Progress of M. d'Anjou in the Low Countries—Monsieur retires from Mons—He repairs to Alençon—Disfavour of M. de Bussy—Return of the duc to Paris—Reconciliation between the royal brothers—Gifts made to Monsieur by the king—Departure of M. d'Anjou for England—Synod of Melun—Assassination of Bussy d'Amboise—Death of the maréchal de Montmorency—Negotiations of the queen-mother—Assembly of Mazère—Return of queen Catherine to Paris—Her magnificent reception.

From Chantilly the king and his consort proceeded to visit the cardinal de Bourbon at Gaillon. The royal pair, after making a brief sojourn with their kinsman, continued their journey to Dieppe, a port greatly patronized by the king, who usually there made his purchases of dogs, parrots, and apes.

On the return of Henry to Paris, after an absence of little more than a fortnight, the feuds in the royal household were renewed with increased acrimony. The discord and jealousies rose to such a height that the merest condescension on the part of the king towards one of his favourites, was visited by a challenge to

combat from those who deemed themselves slighted. In the same fashion were the smiles of the reigning beauties of the court resented by their disappointed admirers; until the brawls of the Louvre acquired such disgraceful notoriety that the provost of Paris was on more than one occasion compelled to wait on his majesty and offer remonstrance. The coquetry of the queen of Navarre greatly increased the discord. Marguerite had apparently pardoned the past misdeeds of M. de Quélus, who still held the first rank in the good graces of the king. She also received very graciously the advances of another of the king's minions, Charles de Balsac sieur d'Entragues. It so happened that after a visit to the apartment of queen Marguerite a violent quarrel ensued between these young cavaliers, the precise cause of which was unknown except to the king, who carefully kept the secret. As usual the feud terminated in a challenge; and as the aggrieved parties were leaders in the privileged band, their quarrel was vehemently espoused by their companions. Quélus chose for his seconds MM. de Maugiron and de Livarrot: Entragues accepted the offers of service made by Riberac and Schomberg. At dawn the following morning these cavaliers repaired to the Marché aux Chevaux, originally the courtyard of the Palais des Tournelles, and the spot where Henry II. fell by the hand of Montgomery in the fatal joust of the Rue St. Antoine. A furious combat commenced; all the cavaliers drawing their swords after having first driven away the night-watch, which attempted to interpose by arresting the parties. Quélus engaged with Entragues, who dealt his adversary nineteen wounds, leaving him, as he believed, dead, and himself escaped with a slight flesh wound in the arm. Schomberg and Maugiron fell mortally wounded, and expired before aid could be

obtained. Livarrot was dangerously wounded on the head, but eventually recovered. Riberac, the opponent of Maugiron, received a sword thrust in his side and was carried to the Hotel de Guise, where he expired two days after the combat. The author of the catastrophe, Quélus, who amongst other wounds had received a thrust through the lungs, was transported to the adjacent hôtel de Boissy in a dying condition. A messenger was despatched to inform the king of this bloody fray. Henry's transports of rage and grief alarmed the spectators; and but for the presence of Catherine and the duc de Guise, his majesty's vengeance might have been forthwith felt by Entragues and others concerned in the cause of the quarrel. Quélus was immediately visited by his royal master, whose grief demonstrated itself in the most extravagant fashion. Henry caused his own physicians and surgeons to be summoned; and the skill of Ambrose Paré averted for a short time the final catastrophe. Every day, and even during the night, the king spent hours by the bedside of the sufferer, tending him with fraternal care and dressing his wounds. Chains were stretched across the Place in front of the hôtel de Boissy, that the noise of passing vehicles might not disturb the repose of Quélus. The king, moreover, refused to see Entragues, and even threatened him with death in case Quélus died. The wounds of the latter, however, were mortal, and he survived the encounter only twenty days. He died, clasping the hand of his indulgent master, murmuring, "Ah, mon roy, mon roy!"[1] The king abandoned himself to the most degrading transports of grief for the loss of his favourite. He threw himself on the body, embracing the senseless form with frantic despair.

[1] L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III. Davila, p. 408. De Thou, liv. 66.

With his own hand he severed the fair and flowing locks of hair,[1] and unclasped the ear-rings with which he had some time previously decorated his favourite. The body of Quélus was by the royal command embalmed and laid in sumptuous state in the great hall of the hôtel de Boissy, side by side with the coffin which contained the remains of Maugiron.[2] The king, attended by his officers, came in state to visit this *chapelle ardente*. After sprinkling the biers with holy water, he remained for several hours beside them to pray and to weep. All amusement was interdicted in the palace; and his majesty received the condolences of his court, arrayed in robes of violet velvet, as if he had been mourning for his only brother. He, moreover, composed the following lines, which by royal command were affixed to the pall at the foot of the coffins:—

Seigneur! reçois en ton giron
Schomberg, Quélus et Maugiron!

The royal grief at length became ludicrous in its excess. Long before the day appointed for the ceremonial of the interment of Quélus and Maugiron, caricatures swarmed in the streets of Paris, holding up to ridicule the weak and excitable monarch. Pamphlets were published relating in language more vehement than decent the abominable debaucheries of the deceased minions; in the recital of which the names of some of the greatest ladies of the court were not respected. Their rapacity and profane violence, and the license of their tongue were sedulously paraded; while the surviving cavaliers

[1] The king had the hair he cut from the head of Quélus set in gold and jewels.

[2] Henry wrote a letter of condolence to the father of Maugiron: Bibl. Imp. MS. Fontanieu, 350 & 351—Lettre de Henri III. à M. de Maugiron, the king says, "A jamais me demeurera dans le cœur la mémoire de feu Maugiron votre fils, et quand vous en avez quelqu'un grand et quant vous le me voudrez envoyer je le tiendrai tant l'amitie que la mórt m' espeche de faire à celluy qui seyt en la gloire de Dieu."

of the obnoxious band were sternly warned to commence a timely reformation. Despite these ominous censures, the obsequies of the favourites were celebrated with royal pomp in the church dedicated to St. Paul. The funeral cars were followed by the households of the king and of the two queens Catherine and Louise. The great officers of the crown officiated by royal command, and the king viewed the procession from the window of a house adjacent to the church. Henry subsequently erected a superb mausoleum of white marble to the memory of Quélus and Maugiron, adorned with the recumbent effigies of these favourites. The king, meanwhile, showed himself disposed to execute his threat concerning Entragues, whom his majesty termed "the slayer of Quélus." Entragues, however, found a powerful protector in the duc de Guise,[1] who had afforded him refuge after the combat in his hôtel. "M. d'Entragues," said the duke, "has demeaned himself as a *preux chevalier* and a true-hearted gentleman. If any person seeks to molest him they shall feel the edge of my sword, which cuts sharply!" The queen of Navarre, it was also remarked, displayed marked friendship for the discarded favourite; and was even heard to declare that had Quélus been luckily slain before the flight of M. d'Anjou, the present complicated condition of affairs might have been avoided.

The anger of Henry was strongly roused against the duc de Guise; for the duke's defence of Entragues, in which the queen of Navarre was in some mysterious manner concerned, was the first public defiance offered to his sovereign by the chief of the League. Accord-

[1] M. d'Antragues s'étant apperçu de la mesintelligence secrete entre le roy et M. de Guise se livra entièrement au duc; et sachant que ce duc n'aimoit point Quélus, il fut bien aise que ce mignon lui donnat un jour occasion de se battre, tant pour donner des marques de son adresse et de son courage que pour seconder les desseins du duc de Guise son protecteur."—Journal de L'Estoile.

ingly Henry set about avenging the slight with his accustomed perfidy. Amongst his band of chamberlains was Paul Stuart de Caussade, comte de St. Mégrin, a young cavalier, accomplished and of most promising parts, though vitiated by contact with the profligate court. It was Henry's practice to avenge petty offences by assailing the reputation of the wives or daughters of those who had offended him. Women, therefore, held the king in detestation; and the League had no ally so powerful as, nor the king enemies more vindictive than, the ladies of his court. It so happened that the king had observed the duchesse de Guise and St. Mégrin converse together on several occasions with great animation of manner. St. Mégrin, when Henry rallied him on the flattering preference shown for his society by the duchess, responded by a complacent smile; and insinuated that his relations with the greatest lady of the court out of the royal circle were not limited to accidental *rencontres* in the saloons of the Louvre. Upon this hint Henry determined to act, with the intent of humbling the pride of the duke, by casting a slur on the unblemished reputation of his wife; and of compelling Guise to meet in combat an adversary so inferior in dignity as St. Mégrin, and thereby to commit that breach of the peace which in the affair of Quélus he had indignantly censured. It was surmised that the conjugal attachment between the duc and the duchesse de Guise had never been strong, though their outward deportment was friendly and decorous. Absorbed by his vast projects for the aggrandizement of the house of Lorraine, Guise cared comparatively little for the wife whom he had been coerced into espousing; the more especially when inclination, revenge, and personal interest, were best consulted in the *liaison* he had never ceased to maintain with the sister of his sovereign. St. Mégrin yielded only too readily to the culpable sug-

gestions of the king, and did all in his power, by his assiduity and boastings of the favourable notice of madame de Guise, to establish those intimate relations which he then only simulated. It was a dangerous experiment, as all parties soon found, that of tampering with the honour of Guise. A shameful rumour was presently circulated, that a certain individual, whose name was suppressed, had surprised madame de Guise and the comte de St. Mégrin[1] alone, engaged in confidential converse in the bed-chamber of queen Catherine. Letters were, moreover, privately circulated, which, it was said, had been exchanged between madame de Guise and St. Mégrin. The scandal reached the ears of the duc de Mayenne and the cardinal de Guise, who desired, but yet presumed not, to mention the slander to their brother the duke, though they believed it to be groundless, and fabricated in the royal cabinet. At length M. de Bassompierre, whom the duke admitted to his closest intimacy, volunteered to break the matter to his patron; as the conduct of St. Mégrin, emboldened by the rumour, and the consequent apathy displayed by the duke, began seriously to compromise madame de Guise. One morning, therefore, Bassompierre sought the duke in his private cabinet. Guise commenced to discourse, as usual, upon various secret matters, when, observing the downcast countenance of his friend, he asked what afflicted him. "Monseigneur," responded Bassompierre, "a few days ago a personage whom I esteem highly consulted me on the way which I should deem most expedient to impart to a third party the afflicting fact that it is rumoured his wife is unworthy

[1] De Thou states, that many years afterwards he perused letters supposed to have been written by St. Mégrin to the duchesse de Guise, then in the possession of the Abbé d'Elbène, and that these epistles were filled with the grossest abuse of the king. Perroniana et Thuana (Cologne, 1594), ou Pensées du Cardinal du Peronne et M. de Thou.

of his confidence, though the party I allude to has not the smallest suspicion of her faithlessness. Such, monseigneur, is the source of the chagrin which you have detected. It would, therefore, give me great relief, as we have fallen on the subject, if you would advise me as to what counsel I ought to offer to my friend upon a subject so delicate." The duke instantly comprehended, by the manner and adroit allusions of Bassompierre, that it was his object to convey some intimation relative to madame de Guise. With dissimulation equally refined, the duke gravely rejoined: "Whoever the person may be, monsieur, who has consulted you, if he calls himself the friend of the injured party, let him avenge his friend's affront. In my opinion, he who is indiscreet enough to reveal to a husband the dishonour of which he remains in ignorance heaps insult on injury. As for myself, monsieur, God has bestowed upon me a consort virtuous as I could desire. I thank heaven that I have never yet had cause to distrust her honour; nevertheless, if such a misfortune happened, and any individual were daring enough thereupon to enlighten me—you behold this sword? well, the life then of that imprudent friend should first pay the forfeit of his temerity!" Bassompierre thereupon wisely held his peace; but on leaving the duke he repaired to the duc de Mayenne, and to the cardinal de Guise, and reported his interview.[1] The same evening in the court circle the king flippantly made some coarse allusions on the good fortune of M. de St. Mégrin, which so exasperated Mayenne that he resolved to avenge the insult, in the mode his brother had suggested, by taking the life of St. Mégrin as he quitted

[1] Relation of Charles Maurice le Tellier, archbishop of Rheims, écrite de sa propre main au marge du MS. de Rigault de l'histoire de M. de Thou, who states that he received the anecdote from the lips of M. de Bassompierre.

the Louvre on the following evening. At this period bands of desperate men were congregated in the capital, impoverished by the cessation of the war, and inured to the perpetration of atrocious crimes. It was not, therefore, difficult for the princes of Lorraine to hire a band of bravoes to waylay and take the life of this unfortunate young cavalier. Before St. Mégrin quitted the Louvre on the evening selected for the ambuscade, the king received a sudden intimation—probably through Villequier, and the army of spies which the latter entertained in the capital—that some extraordinary peril awaited his favourite from the resentment of the princes of Lorraine. His majesty, consequently, pressed the count to remain in the palace all night. St. Mégrin, however, ridiculed the intimation, boastfully adding, "Well, let them come, these Lorraine princes—let them dare to attack me, and they shall find a man true and valiant." The king, therefore, reluctantly permitted his favourite to depart. No sooner, however, had St. Mégrin entered one of the obscure streets which led from the Place du Louvre to his abode, than he was assailed by assassins. A page, who preceded his master carrying a flambeau, was the first victim; while the count, after offering a brave defence, was left for dead on the pavement, bleeding from innumerable poniard wounds. The clash of weapons, meantime, attracted the attention of the night watch, which speedily repaired in force to the place of combat to arrest the midnight brawlers. By an individual of this party St. Mégrin was raised and transported, speechless and in a dying state, to his hôtel, while notice was sent to the king of the catastrophe. Henry, when he learned the fate of his unfortunate victim, appeared to be deeply affected; but investigation was instantly suppressed concerning the authors of the daring crime. Cheverny told the king that it was his policy to connive at deeds

of violence perpetrated by the orthodox chieftains, rather than endanger the peace of the realm; while Catherine added, "that in this case the more especially, the lord-keeper counselled wisely, as his majesty had himself provoked the outrage." The body of St. Mégrin, by the command of Henry, was conveyed to the hôtel de Boissy, and there lay in state for eight days. He was finally interred in the church of St. Paul, in the same vault with Quélus and Maugiron.[1]

The duc de Guise, meanwhile, was not so insensible as he feigned to appear to the rumours affecting the reputation of his consort. He resolved, therefore, to check betimes any disposition to levity, on the part of the duchess, by administering to her a strong practical lesson. Accordingly, on the same night that St. Mégrin was assassinated the duke entered the apartment of his consort, holding a bowl in one hand and a poniard in the other. At the summons of her husband, the duchess awoke from a deep sleep. The duke approached, and stood close to her pillow holding the dagger and bowl; and without permitting her to speak, he commenced a narration of the scandalous stories current respecting her *liaison* with St. Mégrin. After overwhelming his wife with reproaches for her levity, the duke imparted the doom which his vengeance had that night prepared for the audacious asperser of her honour. "Nevertheless, madame," continued he, "it is fitting also that your guilt or imprudence should likewise be expiated. Resolve, therefore; you too must die by poison or by this dagger—choose!" The duchess with a cry of affright pleaded for mercy; she threw herself at the

[1] While the obsequies of St. Mégrin were being celebrated, another brawl happened outside the church, in which a young cavalier was killed by the comte de Grammont, on some frivolous quarrel relative to a wand snatched from the hand of one of his pages by de Chavigny, who was instantly stabbed.

duke's feet and solemnly protested that she had never broken her marriage vow. She entreated him to take pity on their children; and declared her willingness to quit Paris, and retire to Nanteuil or to their castle of Joinville. The tears of the duchess, however, failed to move the determination of her husband; and his threats at length compelled her to take the bowl which he presented, and drain its fatal contents to the dregs. The duchess then fell on her knees, and commending her soul to God, prayed that at least an ecclesiastic might be permitted to receive her confession and administer the last sacraments of the church. Guise made no reply, but quitted the apartment, locking the door after him. For more than half an hour the duchess remained alone suffering pangs of suspense and apprehension, and so prostrated with terror that she had not strength to move from the spot where the duke left her on her knees. At the expiration of this period, Guise returned to the apartment. He then raised his wife from the ground; and told her that the liquid which he had compelled her to swallow was not poison, but simply the soup which he was himself accustomed to take on retiring to rest, and that her fears had alone prevented her from discerning this fact. The duke then proceeded seriously to admonish his consort. He avowed his disbelief of the reports circulated respecting her intimacy with M. de St. Mégrin; but added that her own levity of manner could alone have given the semblance of probability to the charges. He bade her heed well the lesson she had that night received; adding, that if her deviation in ever so little from the stainless honour which became the consort of Guise were once ascertained, its retribution should be signal. Finally, the duke commanded his consort to present herself on the following morning at the *lever* of queen Louise, and to evince no emotion

unbecoming her honour and his own, when the fate of the comte de St. Mégrin should be canvassed in her presence. Madame de Guise obeyed her husband to the letter; and from thenceforth the king and his minions refrained from tampering with the reputation of the duchess—for no one of the frivolous throng presumed to incur the vengeance of Guise. This episode, however, did not increase the fervour of the duke's loyalty, nor that of the house of Lorraine. The duchesse de Montpensier especially made violent demonstration of her contempt and indignation; and, indeed, seldom afterwards took the pains to pay her court to Henry and Louise at the Louvre. She continued, however, assiduous in her homage to queen Catherine; and requested permission to accompany the latter in her approaching progress of pacification in the southern provinces of the realm.

The enterprises hostile to the crown of Spain, in which the duc d'Anjou had embarked in the Low Countries, had seriously compromised the government of king Henry. It was not credited at the courts of Madrid and London that Monsieur had presumed to espouse the cause of the Flemish confederates, without the private sanction and connivance of queen Catherine, however resolutely Henry might disavow the proceeding. Queen Elizabeth, deeply offended at the manner in which Monsieur had disregarded the request she had made him, to refrain from joining the comte de Lalain in the town of Mons, held frequent conferences with the Spanish ambassador in London, don Bernardo de Mendoza; and seemed at one time inclined to aid the Flemish viceroy with men to oppose the advance of a body of eight thousand auxiliaries under la Noue. The levies, already pouring into Flanders in the train of the duc d'Anjou, had been encountered and defeated near to St. Omer by Ottavio Gonzaga, brother of the duke of Mantua and of

the duc de Nevers. Under these untoward circumstances Catherine perceived that, as the French government had declined to arrest and disavow Monsieur's enterprise, by commanding him on his allegiance to retire from a contest with the ally of his brother's crown, Spanish troops might cross the frontier, and seek to create a diversion by carrying the war into France. Catherine remembered with uneasiness and distrust the conferences between don Juan and the duc de Guise at Joinville, when the latter traversed France on his road to assume supreme command over the Low Countries. The head-quarters of the League were the provinces of Poitou and Picardy, the latter lying in perilous proximity to the Flemish frontier. Would the loyalty and patriotism of Guise, Mayenne, and la Tremouille, therefore, incline them to stand by the reigning dynasty in the event of an invasion, even when the alternative might be to combat the arch-protector of the League, Philip II. of Spain, the champion of the orthodox? Over this grave question Catherine deeply pondered. She perceived that if by flattery or persuasion she could induce the neutrality, and possibly the loyal adherence, of the revolted chieftains of the south, the crown under any political juncture likely to result from the enterprise of M. d'Anjou, would be comparatively safe. Having fully convinced herself of the expediency of this measure, Catherine with her wonted energy sought the means of achieving her purpose. The chieftains dominating over the south were Damville, Bellegarde, Condé, and the king of Navarre. Damville, the audacious rebel who had sworn never more to behold the face of his sovereign, still maintained almost regal sway over the province of Languedoc, obeying the mandates of the government only when such served for the promotion of his own purposes and designs. The king of Navarre and Condé were too

wary to be again lured into the queen's toils: Bellegarde, irritated by his fall from the king's favour, and by the non-recognition of the services rendered to the royal cause in Poland, had seized the marquisate of Saluzzo as the heritage of his wife,[1] in which usurpation he was supported by the duke of Savoy. The discerning eye of Catherine de Medici, however, scanned the private feuds reigning between these chieftains, outwardly so strong, and their principal adherents. The channel of these under-currents of dissension, therefore, she resolved to widen; and none could boast of greater adroitness and skill in this species of warfare than Catherine de Medici. First, her scrutiny was directed to the *entourage* of her son-in-law, the king of Navarre. She beheld the ascendency and rival claims of one mistress after another; all, however, yielding before the attractions of Corisandre d'Andouins, the wife of Henry's favourite, Philibert comte de Grammont—an accomplished and valiant nobleman, as became one of his lineage. There existed feuds between the king of Navarre and Biron, the lieutenant-governor of Guienne; between the comte de Soissons and the vicomte de Turenne; and again between this latter noble and the potent house of Duras. The duc de Damville was now at issue with the entire Protestant party of the south, and with the maréchal de Bellegarde. On the partial and temporary rupture which had ensued between the Calvinist party and the faction of Les Politiques, Henry, acting with that insidious treachery which it appears to have been his highest joy to exercise, attempted to overreach his two powerful subjects, Damville and Bellegarde. The king had commenced by proposing to

[1] Marguerite de Saluzzo, widow of the maréchal de Termes, the uncle of Bellegarde. This marriage was connived in by the duc de Savoye. Ultimately a papal dispensation was obtained, legalizing the marriage of Bellegarde with his uncle's widow.

bestow the joint command of the royal army of the south on Damville and Bellegardë, provided that they returned to their obedience and declined further intercourse with the insurgent Calvinists. The seizure of the marquisate of Saluzzo by Bellegarde, meantime, being extremely unpalatable to his majesty, he presently proposed, by the advice of his mother, voluntarily to cede the disputed territory to Damville[1] as a heritage in all perpetuity, provided that the duke would resign the government of Languedoc. This important command, which was hereditary, the king, moreover, offered in compensation to Bellegarde in lieu of Saluzzo, provided that the marshal consented to share the government with the maréchal de Joyeuse, the father of his majesty's then reigning favourite Anne de Joyeuse. As a preliminary to this transfer, the king required that the maréchal de Bellegarde and the duc de Damville should resign, the one the marquisate of Saluzzo and the other the command in Languedoc, to commissioners appointed by his majesty. Damville had too long experienced the perfidy of the court to resign his government without a tangible compensation; he therefore peremptorily refused the king's proposition. Bellegarde, however, complied, and delivered up the town and fortress of Saluzzo to Charles de Birague, brother of the cardinal-chancellor. Bellegarde had therefore waited in vain for the realization of his majesty's promise respecting Languedoc, or for the restitution of the marquisate, as had been previously agreed. At length, weary of this double dealing on the part of his sovereign, he levied a body of troops and marched against Birague, retook Saluzzo, and soon after reconquered

[1] The house of Montmorency had a claim on the marquisate from the alliance of the grandfather of the constable Anne de Montmorency with a daughter of Saluzzo. So remote, however, was the claim, that it had never been asserted by the princes of Montmorency.

the entire territory. This affair had been the cause of violent recriminations between Damville and the marshal; the which, for their own tortuous purposes, were still fomented by king Henry and his mother.

Such being the condition of affairs in the south-eastern provinces of the realm, Catherine resolved upon a progress thither during the winter of the year 1578. As soon as her majesty's intentions were made public, the queen of Navarre requested permission to accompany her mother to rejoin the king her husband. Absent from Paris Marguerite anticipated greater freedom, and increased opportunity to intrigue for the aggrandizement of her favourite brother; while in case of the demise of the duc d'Anjou, her residence in Béarn would insure her immunity from any retaliation which the king might devise for past misdemeanours. On the other hand, the sight of his sister had become odious to Henry. The licence of her life, and her unquenchable resistance to his will irritated him beyond endurance. Her devotion for the duc d'Anjou, who had taken up arms in defiance of the command of his majesty and the advice of the council, rendered her temporary withdrawal from the capital expedient; while the undisguised sympathy which subsisted between Marguerite and the duc de Guise threatened evils of even greater import. Henry, moreover, owed his sister a still more deadly grudge; he regarded her as accessory to, if not the principal contriver of, the death of Quélus and St. Mégrin. He knew that the blood of du Guast had been shed in expiation of the wrong done to his sister in her girlhood; and his majesty remained too uncomfortably conscious of that period of secret slander and persecution ever to hope to regain Marguerite's friendship. Henry, therefore, was eager at this period to concede to the queen of Navarre the long-coveted permission to depart. During their farewell interview,

Henry nevertheless thought fit to comment reproachfully on their frequent misunderstandings. He assured his sister that he harboured towards her no ill-will; and he prayed for the benefit of her mediation in the approaching conferences in the south. "Madame," said Henry, "a little reflection will convince you how beneficial to your interests my friendship might be. The friendship borne towards you by Monsieur our brother can only bring you ruin, while mine could endow you with comfort and prosperity." The king of Navarre having intimated his unwillingness to confer with Catherine, unless the queen his wife were first restored to him content with the treatment she had received from her brother, and with her dowry paid, Henry commanded that his sister's pecuniary affairs should be investigated and settled to her satisfaction. As a parting gift his majesty assigned the queen an additional pension on his own resources, and presented her himself with the act of donation.[1]

Queen Catherine and her daughter Marguerite set out at the commencement of the month of August, 1578, attended by a numerous suite. Their first sojourn after quitting the capital was made at Olinville, where the king met them, to flatter his sister, and to hold a last conference with his mother. Catherine was intrusted by her son with unlimited powers. The king wrote to Damville and to the other disaffected chieftains letters, which his mother was to deliver or not at her pleasure; powers were moreover confided to the queen to amplify, if necessary, the concessions granted to the Calvinist population of the south by the Edict of Poitiers. "Every one, therefore," writes Davila, "received the decisions of the queen as so many oracles; the king her son having remitted all authority into her hands, solacing

[1] Vie de Marguerite de Valois, par le Père Mongez. Mém. de Marguerite de Valois.

himself, meantime, with splendid pageants and banquetings." From Olinville Catherine and her court proceeded to Poitiers; and from thence to La Réole, at which place her majesty was received by the king of Navarre at the head of a brilliant troop of five hundred cavaliers, his adherents. The meeting between Marguerite and her husband, despite their alleged impatience to rejoin each other, was not cordial. After a brief interview the king of Navarre returned to Nérac, while Marguerite and her mother took up their abode at Port Ste. Marie, a small place six miles distant. During her residence at Ste. Marie, Catherine occupied herself in adjusting the dispute which had arisen between the maréchal Biron and the king of Navarre relative to some small places in Guyenne; as until he had obtained satisfaction upon this point, the king refused either to receive back again his wife or to agree to the conference, the object of her majesty's journey. Catherine, therefore, for greater personal security, returned to La Réole; and during the frivolous and angry discussions which ensued, she quietly effected numerous reforms for the tranquillity of the provinces of Limousin and Poitou; re-establishing the Romish ritual in many places from whence it had been banished; recalling the priests, and restoring to them their revenues. She moreover received despatches from the Catholic communities of Guyenne and Lower Navarre. Catherine likewise made overtures of reconciliation to the prince de Condé, who was residing at St. Jean d'Angely, aloof from allies whom he deemed lukewarm, and even apostates from the cause of religion and liberty. The queen invited Condé to visit her at La Réole, and even proposed for his acceptance the hand of Marguerite de Lorraine, sister of queen Louise.[1] The prince made no objection to the alliance, but excused himself from ap-

[1] This princess was afterwards married to the duc de Joyeuse.

pearing before the queen on the plea of poverty, as his finances were too low to enable him to present himself with a suitable cortège.

Meantime, the king of Navarre professed himself satisfied with the reparations made him by Biron, his majesty's lieutenant over Guyenne, and therefore avowed his readiness to receive his consort at the court of Nérac, provided Marguerite consented that their marriage might previously be solemnized again according to the reformed ritual. This proposition was firmly rejected by queen Catherine, who indignantly reproached her son-in-law for his dishonourable trifling respecting the wife whose return he had, on more than one occasion, so strenuously solicited. Whilst this squabble still pended, Marguerite, as queen of Navarre and consort of the governor of Guyenne, made her public entry into Bordeaux with extraordinary splendour. The beauty of the young queen kindled vivid enthusiasm in the bosom of the loyal Bordelais; her grace, and facility of repartee, seemed to them absolutely marvellous, as Marguerite profusely lavished those blandishments which had been found irresistible even by the most *blasé* of Henry's courtiers. She insisted upon replying spontaneously to the harangues addressed to her by the parliament and clergy of Bordeaux; and the delight of the people was intense as, radiant in beauty and attire, Marguerite fearlessly stepped in advance of her suite, and spoke in those melodious accents upon which Brantôme rapturously expatiates.[1] Catherine is said to have experienced intense satisfaction on hearing of the triumphs of her daughter. One of Marguerite's most bitter satirists at the court of Béarn had been the young vicomte de Turenne. In this hour of

[1] Brantôme: Vie de Marguerite de Valois. Mém. de Sully, du Duc de Bouillon. Relations des Ambassadeurs Vénetiens sur les Affaires de France au Seizième Siècle. Relazione di Lippomano.

triumph, therefore, the queen turned the fascination of her charms on the viscount, whom she was aware that her husband eminently trusted. Like most other men, Turenne was not proof against the smiles of the royal siren; and his feud even with the family of Duras soon acquired a secondary importance, in his estimation, to that of pleasing Marguerite. With such a colleague, the queen of Navarre doubted not to obtain a speedy and honourable installation at Nérac. She accompanied her mother, however, to Toulouse, where Catherine was greeted with acclamation by the inhabitants of that orthodox city. The queen was here joined by Biron, Pibrac, Joyeuse, and la Mothe-Fénélon, all statesmen of zeal and capacity, who presented themselves to aid her majesty at the approaching conference. The duc de Damville also visited the queen to make "his submission," which, however, comprehended neither the resignation of his government, nor a dutiful visit of reparation to the court of Henry III. A courier from the king, moreover, presented the duke with the following condescending letter, written throughout by the hand of his royal master :—

HENRY III. KING OF FRANCE TO THE MARECHAL DUC DE DAMVILLE.

Mon Cousin,—I have sent back Chartiers, your secretary. You know whether I once loved you or not. I write, therefore, to assure you, that if you will do me the great service of helping me to restore unity and tranquillity throughout my realm, my ancient affection will at once revive. It is my earnest desire to behold my kingdom prosperous and devoted to one faith, and that the holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic. I explain myself without reserve to you, as to a true and orthodox son of the church. I promise, in order that you may trust me more entirely, always to reserve an ear for you, that you may defend yourself at any time when others accuse you to me; as it is my will and desire to accept, and to recognise you as my loyal subject, on the

performance by you of those virtuous deeds which your said secretary assured me were contemplated by you.

I pray God, mon cousin, to have you evermore in His holy keeping.

Your good master,

HENRY.[1]

Thus conjured, Damville commenced his negotiations with queen Catherine more in the tone of a victorious conqueror than in the humble guise of a pardoned rebel, the penalty of whose treason had been remitted.

Meanwhile, the ecclesiastical restorations effected by the queen's authority, and other enterprises sanctioned by Biron, gave great umbrage to the Calvinist chieftains; and Turenne was a second time deputed to remonstrate. Catherine gave a cold reception to the envoy sent by her son-in-law, and told him "that the king of Navarre might look only for such accidents so long as he persisted in refusing to receive back his consort, or to appoint a place for the conferences which were to adjust for the future all similar differences." Turenne expressed the anxious desire of his master to receive queen Marguerite. Catherine thereupon intimated that, if such were the case, the king of Navarre might meet her at Auch, whither she was proceeding in a few days; and, meantime, she would write and command the cessation of the enterprises of which his majesty complained. Turenne being himself a contumacious subject, and a refugee in Navarre from the proceedings instituted against la Mole and Coconnas during the days of Catherine's last regency, her majesty was pleased, moreover, to add a few obliging expressions as regarded his own case, provided that he disposed the

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. No. 8844, fol. 4. Paris, 1579. Fontanieu, 348 and 349.

mind of his royal master to accept the propositions she was shortly intending to proffer.[1]

The king of Navarre and his suite, therefore, repaired at the specified time to Auch, and there took up their abode in a mansion appertaining to M. de Roquelaure. The queens, on the day that Henri arrived, were abroad enjoying the pastime of entrapping wild doves and wood-pigeons in nets, a sport which was deemed highly entertaining in that part of the country. "The royal pair" (Marguerite and Henri), says Turenne, who was a spectator of the interview, "saluted each other, and indicated by their demeanour a greater inclination to forget their quarrels than they had ever done before. Afterwards her majesty's musicians appeared, and we all began to dance."[2] The beautiful maidens in the suite of queen Catherine had their share during this day in mollifying the heart of the king of Navarre, and in rendering him more susceptible of the political influence which the queen-mother wished to establish. Madame de Sauve, now a widow, moreover, was in attendance on Catherine, and scrupulously obeyed the directions of her royal mistress. But the charms of mademoiselle Dayelle, a beautiful Italian girl of comparatively plebeian origin, and of mademoiselle Davila, sister of the historian of that name, a Cypriote by birth, seemed to be fairly winning from Henri more concessions than the most elaborate of Catherine's appeals. The rural ball was thus merrily proceeding, when suddenly d'Armagnac, *valet-de-chambre* to the king of Navarre, presented himself, and approaching Turenne, he whispered earnestly in the viscount's ear. At a sign from Turenne, Armagnac then accosted his royal master, and imparted the intelligence which had just arrived of the sudden seizure of the garrison

[1] Mém. du Duc de Bouillon, l'année 1578.
[2] Ibid.

of La Réole by the Catholic party—which place had been lent by the king of Navarre for the residence of Catherine, under the strongest possible pledges for its eventual restoration. Henri managed to dissemble his indignation, and continued his discourse. After the sensation occasioned by the mysterious appearance of Armagnac had somewhat subsided, Henri rose and announced his intention of going to meet queen Catherine, and escort her back to Auch; for the queen, after remaining during part of the afternoon a spectatress of the fête, had departed to take the recreation of an airing with madame de Montpensier and others, through the picturesque environs of the town. Henri rode up to the queen's coach, and raising his cap and white *panache*, abruptly said, "Madame, we trusted that your presence would have extinguished these our troubles, instead of which, it appears that you excite them. I am his majesty's true subject. Would that there may be found as many inclined to promote his majesty's welfare as there seem to be enemies to retard it."—"My son, what is this that you are telling me?" asked the queen, greatly surprised. "Madame, La Réole has been taken by your troops!" rejoined the king of Navarre. Catherine, appearing still more astonished, turned towards Biron, who was sitting at the door of the coach, and asked the marshal if he knew of such event. "No, madame, no," replied Biron.[1] The king of Navarre, nevertheless, despite this affectation of ignorance, refused to return with Catherine to Auch; and putting spurs to his horse, he entered the same night the little town of Florence,[2] in Armagnac, the royal garrison of which he

[1] Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III. liv. vii. p. 446.

[2] When Catherine learned the capture of Florence, she laughed heartily, exclaiming, "Je vois bien que c'est la revanche de la Réole, et que le roy de Navarre a voulu faire chou pour chou; mais le mien est mieux pommé."—Economies Royales, politiques et militaires, chap. x.

expelled, and then retired to Nérac. Here the king resolutely declined to treat until the restoration of St. Réole had been conceded. A compromise was at length agreed upon—the place was restored to the Calvinists; but the sieur d'Ussac, a faithful adherent of the house of Valois, although a convert from Rome, was nominated its governor, instead of Henri's trusty servant M. de Favas.

The conferences of Nérac then opened, the queen and her daughter sojourning during this interval at Agen. The object of this meeting was to explain and render more precise the meaning and action of the edict of Poitiers, called by Henry, "his own edict." This treaty, like many others negotiated during this reign, had been signed, ratified, registered, and never executed—or, at most, only partially, and in minor details. During the whole of the winter of 1578, the royal deputies, and the members of the reformed churches selected to confer with them by the king of Navarre, continued to wrangle on the interpretation of the various clauses of this edict. At length, on the last day of February of the ensuing year, 1579, twenty-nine articles being agreed upon—all favourable to the liberty and extension of the Protestant churches of the south—were signed by Catherine, and countersigned by Biron, Joyeuse, Lansac, Fénélon, and Pibrac. Nevertheless, these articles, themselves explanatory of a previous edict, were, on the departure of the queen, deemed so indefinite as to require, during the course of the following year, a third conference for their elucidation. On their signature, however, they were accepted with vehement joy; while the fêtes given at Nérac on the occasion were presided over by Marguerite, now outwardly reconciled with the king her husband. From Agen the queen-mother proceeded again to Toulouse,

still attended by Damville. As the penetrating judgment of this princess enabled her to descry and obviate the cause of much bitterness towards the government, so the insinuating condescension of her demeanour revived the waning loyalty of the south. The majority of the inhabitants of Guyenne, Béarn, and of portions of Languedoc associated the era of bigotry, ignorance, and retrogression with the rule of the Valois; they were men who, under the vigorous and enlightened sway of Jeanne d'Albret and her son, had been taught to reason acutely, and to act deliberately. Their reformed faith, and its consequent hardy speculations and analysis of motives and doctrine, had shaken the notion so sacredly cherished during preceding centuries of their responsibility of kingly power. Catherine carefully avoided collision with these newly aroused convictions. Her mission was one of conciliation. Instead of promulgating edicts by the absolute authority of the crown, she assembled the States of Languedoc at Castelnaudry, and there had the art to make it appear that the reforms which she deemed indispensable for the maintenance of the royal authority, were concessions granted by her to the importunity of the members. She, moreover, presented the edict of Poitiers and its commentary of Nérac to the parliament of Toulouse, and commanded that august body to institute processes, and deliver judgments only in strict obedience to its enactments.

Having thus calmed the exasperation which before her arrival threatened to overthrow the government, Catherine bade farewell at Castelnaudry to the king and queen of Navarre, and proceeded to Narbonne. From thence she journeyed to Beziers, Pezenas, La Verune, and to Grenoble, pacifying the feuds of the factions by wise concessions and promises. At Grenoble the duc de Savoye met the queen, to mediate between

her majesty and the maréchal de Bellegarde, whose treasonable seizure of Saluzzo had inspired the greatest alarm throughout Italy, lest war should once more envelope that devoted land. The queen had sent a mandate commanding Bellegarde to appear at Grenoble and justify his violent proceedings. The duke of Savoy, however, prayed her majesty not to take it ill if Bellegarde failed to obey her command and present himself within the French territory; nevertheless, if the queen would proceed within the dominion of Savoy, the marshal was willing and anxious to cast himself at her feet. Catherine, though indignant at this bold demand, had too much at heart the pacification she was negotiating to recede. She therefore replied that, during her approaching sojourn at Lyons, she would proceed to the duke's frontier town of Monluel, and there grant audience to M. de Bellegarde.

King Henry, on the departure of Catherine from Olinville, continued his progress to Fontainebleau, where he made a sojourn of several months. The favoured abode and hunting palace of Francis I. and Henry II. was, however, little appreciated by their successor Henry III. The gardens, once unrivalled in the world for the rarity of the flowers and shrubs collected from every known country by Francis I., had been suffered to grow into a tangled wilderness; while the noble lake, the work of Henry II., was choked up with rubbish, and its numerous fountains, many of exquisite design, falling into ruin.

After the decease of Quélus, Villequier temporarily resumed his influence over the mind of Henry, and installed his son-in-law François d'O in the place of first chamberlain, rendered vacant by the death of the former. In the king's band, however, were two cavaliers destined to distance all competitors for the royal favour, and whose influence remained pre-eminent. These were

Anne de Joyeuse, son of the maréchal de Joyeuse, a cavalier whose pretensions could scarcely exceed his illustrious birth; and Jean Louis Nogaret de la Valette, the descendant of a noble and valiant race, one of whose ancestors, the famous Gascon warrior Nogaret, had raised an impious band to smite the supreme pontiff Boniface VIII., when the latter was seized at Anagni by Sciarra Colonna. Not even the most captious of Henry's censors found himself at liberty to ridicule his majesty's new *protégés*, for none, save, perhaps, the princes of Guise could surpass them in valour, accomplishments, or in princely lineage, then considered as almost the only legitimate passport to royal favour. So far the pretensions of Joyeuse and la Valette were unimpeachable; elated, however, by the royal favour they demeaned themselves arrogantly, and alienated those who surpassed them in experience, and in that sagacious penetration which results only from long experience in politics.

In Paris, meantime, the state of public feeling was far from reassuring. On the departure of Catherine for the south, she had incautiously summoned the duc de Guise from his retreat at Joinville and requested him to reside in the capital. Probably this measure was adopted in the hope of balancing the influence of the hostile parties by the presence of Guise; or perhaps even with the view of neutralizing during her absence the political manœuvres of the princes of Lorraine by bringing their chief within the observation of the king's principal ministers, Villequier and Cheverny, men never renowned for their foresight or powers of penetration. Thus when the queen of Navarre quitted the capital, the duc de Guise permanently took up his residence therein. He entered Paris escorted by a body-guard of six hundred horsemen; and from this period, while Marguerite from without continued to

intrigue against her brother's crown, Guise fomented the divisions and factions of the capital. Skilfully did these subtle allies undermine the once fair and stately fabric of the monarchy. Stone after stone they gradually dislodged, until no foundation remained whereon to balance the lofty pretensions of the princes of Lorraine, which perished with the dynasty that had originated and fostered them; while Marguerite, the last of her race, lived to behold herself, as partly the result of her restless intrigues, crownless, homeless, and friendless—a suppliant in the halls of her kindred, then the heritage of a Bourbon, the son of Jeanne d'Albret.

Neither was the intelligence received from the provinces likely to inspire greater confidence and obedience in the capital. The duc de Mayenne had partially suppressed the disaffection in Burgundy; but still the local parliaments refused to register decrees for the levy of fresh taxes, and returned the mandates to the privy council. Other provinces, including Picardy and Bretagne, sent deputies to Paris to represent to the king the impossibility of levying new imposts, and showing that such was the impoverished condition of the country, that the people petitioned to be even relieved from the payment of the established taxation. The demonstration made by the rich and important province of Normandy was still more uncompromising. The States peremptorily intimated to the governor that no levy of new taxes would be proposed or permitted. When the state of public feeling sunk to the lowest ebb of disaffection, it had always been the practice of the French government adroitly to open a fresh channel for popular speculation and discussion; and thus by a skilful application of the national characteristic of inconstancy, the repute of many a statesman had been rescued and the realm preserved from collapse. Henry, therefore, immediately on his return from Fontainebleau,

affixed his royal signature to a *résumé* of the ordinances made in 1577 by the States of Blois, in so far as they were thought by the cabinet to be beneficial to the nation and advantageous to the reigning dynasty.[1] The arbitrary withholding of this document during the period of two years, under the pretext that before these ordinances passed into laws they needed revision by the cabinet, had been one of the sharpest of the popular grievances. The edict as presented by the king to the parliament of Paris contained three hundred and sixty-three articles, all of excellent import, and advocating a legislative progress of astonishing comprehensiveness, considering the impediments and the cruel controversies which agitated the deputies assembled at Blois. Many of these *ordonnances* still remain on the statute-book of France to this day, and are distinguished as the Code Henri. The publication of this important and really patriotic edict was received as a promising omen of a more enlightened administration. To restore completely the good humour of his still sullen liegemen of Paris, the king resolved to treat them to a grand pageant, such as their chivalrous ancestors in days of yore delighted in, before financial difficulties and mal-administration had induced the people to peer too closely beneath the gauds of royalty. The grand cross of St. Michael the Archangel, the order of knighthood instituted in 1469 by Louis XI. in his castle of Amboise, had been so abused during the civil wars by lavish distribution, that it might be seen glittering on the breast of the imperial chief of Hapsburg and on that of the lowest of his majesty's maîtres-d'hôtel. The order, therefore, had fallen into great disrepute, and was called in derision "Collier à toutes bêtes." The king for this reason had long contemplated the institution of a new military order of knighthood dedicated to the Holy

[1] De Thou.

Ghost, in perpetual commemoration that the most remarkable events of his life had befallen him on the day of Pentecost; thereby meaning, his accession to the crowns of Poland and France, and his coronation at Rheims on Whit-Sunday, of the years 1573, 1574-5. Henry had also a deeper motive for the institution of his order; he desired to employ its badge as a brilliant bribe to lure back into the fold of the church the great Calvinist nobles, by tempting them to join an illustrious militia whose oaths and statutes bound its members to the closest communion with Rome, and implicit obedience to the king. ' In the institution of this order another important design had actuated the king, one originally suggested by Catherine de Medici and the deceased cardinal de Lorraine; this was, that while his majesty implored the benison of the church by the dedication of his order to promote her temporal prosperity, he likewise intended that the collar of St. Esprit should diminish and restrain the wealth and influence of the Gallican prelates. In furtherance of this design, Henry towards the close of the year 1578 despatched M. de l'Aubespine to Rome to present to his Holiness the draught of the statutes of the new order; and likewise to make urgent petition that a yearly sum of 200,000 gold crowns[1] might be chargeable on the united revenues of old abbeys and priories throughout the realm, to be applied for the foundation of Commanderies for his knights of the Holy Ghost. When ecclesiastical revenues to the amount indicated by the king had passed from the control of the chapters into the hands of his leading favourites, Henry would have found his churchmen much more amenable to the mandates of the crown. The clergy generally, however, when they learned that it was the king's design to model the constitution of his order on the great

[1] Or, 60,000*l.* sterling.

military fraternities of Spain; and, moreover, to adopt the system of the *encomiendas* there attached to each grand-mastership, raised so violent a storm of protest and clamour, that Gregory XIII. declined to authorize the appropriations demanded. Henry, therefore, was compelled to content himself with brilliant titles of honour, and to endow his knights with courtly privileges instead of substantial benefices. The motto of the new order was *Duce et Auspice*; the cross is of gold enamelled, with eight rays, having a *fleur-de-lis* at every angle. In the centre is a dove of silver, and on the reverse of the cross a St. Michael.

This St. Esprit was suspended from the neck by an azure-coloured ribbon. The collar was composed of the letters H and M, entwined and linked with three letters of the Greek alphabet. These mysterious cyphers created a great scandal, as they were supposed to be the initial letters of the names of Henry's mistresses.[1] So great was the sense of the indecorum of this device, that at the first chapter of the order holden by Henri IV. after his accession, the collar was abolished, and another substituted composed of *fleurs-de-lis* interwoven with tongues of fire, and the cypher H crowned with festoons and trophies. The robes of the knight were so sumptuous and so costly, that eventually few, during the reign of Henry III., could accept the order without mortgaging their lands to pay for their equipment. The grand mantle was of black velvet lined with orange satin. It was embroidered in gold with *fleurs-de-lis*, tongues of fire, and the cyphers and devices of the king wrought in silver. The cloak was of cloth of gold embroidered with silver doves, and with

[1] The mysterious letters were, L, D, and I. The knights were limited to one hundred.—Cérémonies observées à l'Institution de l'Ordre du Saint Esprit, Janvier, 1579—Paris, 1579. Archives Curieuses. De Thou.

the same devices. The doublet and *haut-de-chausses* of the knights were composed of cloth of silver; their shoes and the scabbards of their swords were of white velvet, and their caps of black velvet. Every knight displayed habitually a large orange cross on his cloak, and wore suspended from his neck a small St. Esprit, which was never laid aside. The statutes of the order were numerous; the six principal rules, however, decreed that each knight should take the oath of allegiance to the king, and of obedience to the supremacy of Rome; he bound himself to hear mass once a day, to recite daily ten paters and ten aves, the litany of the St. Esprit, and the seven penitential psalms. He was bound to confess his sins at least twice in the year, and on Whit-Sunday and New Year's-day to communicate, wearing the collar of his order. He was, moreover, expected to pray for the king daily, and to recite, on the decease of the sovereign, a De Profundis and the psalm "*Inclina, Domine.*"

The ceremony of the installation of the knights took place in the church of the Augustinians on the last day of the year 1578. Vespers being chanted, the king rose from his throne and approached the high altar, and kneeling took the oath as grand-master, his confessor, the bishop of Auxerre, officiating. His majesty bound himself and his successors never to dispense with the statute, which enforced the constant reception of the Eucharist by the knights; or to give the order to other than gentlemen, who could prove three degrees of nobility on the paternal side, and of repute orthodox and moral. The prelate then invested his majesty with the robes and insignia of the order; after which Henry took his place on a golden chair, and commenced to create his knights, the bishop of Auxerre administering the oaths. The cavaliers were twenty-six in number. Amongst those selected for the honour were the ducs

de Nevers, d'Uzèz, Mercœur, and d'Aumale, the comtes de Tende, de Gonnor, and de Retz, MM. de Villequier, Balsac, Estrées, de Grammont, and de Strozzi. In this list of noble personages, it is to be remarked that not one prince of the house of Guise-Lorraine, excepting the duc d'Aumale, is mentioned. The alienation between the royal house and that of Guise must at this period have been notable, when its members were not included amongst the recipients of an order founded ostensibly for the defence of the Holy Roman Faith. The following day being New Year's-day, 1579, the king and his knights attended high mass. The church of the Augustinians was filled with a brilliant assemblage of ambassadors, nobles, and prelates. Queen Louise, attended by a numerous retinue, was present. The nave of the church was lined with a double file of Scotch and Swiss guards, between which the procession defiled. First marched the three hundred gentlemen of the king's household, armed with their battleaxes, preceding the newly created knights, who walked two and two, arrayed in their robes. Last of all came king Henry marching alone, and wearing his royal mantle and the collar and badge of the St. Esprit. The mass was chanted by the bishop of Auxerre and other prelates; after which the knights partook of the Holy Sacrament. During the remainder of the day, high festival was holden in the Louvre. The palace resounded with revelry; banquets were given in different apartments to the ladies of the court, the nobles, prelates, and ambassadors, each order being separately regaled. The king entertained the chevaliers du St. Esprit, and that day admitted no other guests to his table. At vesper hour all the personages present again repaired to the church, where, in strange contrast to the festive scene they had just quitted, the office for the dead was intoned. The same ceremonial was repeated on the following day,

when the knights were declared to be duly inaugurated. Their number was definitively limited to one hundred; and by the express desire of Henry they retained the title of knight-commanders. In order to give a semblance of reality to that hollow title, the king assigned to each knight a pension on the privy purse of 1000 crowns.[1]

The expectations of the duc d'Anjou in the Low Countries, meanwhile, were far from having been realized; neither had the decided step which the duke had taken in repairing to Mons been followed by the advantages anticipated by the Flemings. Instead of sending an army to the aid of his brother, the king of France apologized to his royal allies for the rash measure into which Monsieur had been betrayed. The queen of England vouchsafed no sign of alliance; the palatine Casimir treated Monsieur as an ally uncertain and possibly treacherous; Catherine shed profuse tears over the wilful folly of "*son fils egaré,*" and did her best, when in the south, to impede the levies of la Noue and to defeat the military projects of the latter.

Under these circumstances comte Lalain excused himself from yielding either Mons and its province of Hainault, or the towns stipulated by treaty, to the French, until Monsieur should have accomplished some act, other than merely joining the confederates with a body of mercenaries. Lalain treated the duke with profound respect, but narrowly watched his movements, "every one distrusting the professions of Monsieur, who, for a few moments, like a fire of straw, blazed terribly, and then as swiftly subsided." Not one French trooper beyond the stipulated number would

[1] Relazione di Girolamo Lippomano, Ambasciadore en Francia, scritto dal suo secretario, nell'anno 1577–9. Journal de Henri III. Dupleix Marlot: Théâtre d'Honneur.

Lalain permit to enter Mons; and thus coerced and angered, the petulant spirit of Monsieur rebelled when he beheld himself controlled by allies over whom he had hoped to reign. Soon pecuniary straits befell the duke: his household at Mons was conducted on a scale of princely liberality, all persons being entertained who presented themselves to partake of his hospitality. The thrifty Flemings, nevertheless, refused to advance a *groschen* for the relief of their royal ally, whom, in truth, they treated more like a prisoner under *surveillance* than a prince whom they had hailed as their deliverer. The transmission of the duke's immense revenue into Flanders had been thwarted in every way, short of actual prohibition by the king. Accordingly the debts of Monsieur accumulated; until one morning a creditor more rapacious than his fellows, actually procured an order from Lalain to seize and sell by auction the silver plate, and the harness, and caparisons appertaining to the stables of the royal defaulter.[1] The just indignation of Monsieur at this insult was so great, that he vowed to quit the ungrateful and perfidious city. He first forbade the sale of the property seized; and after despatching a courier to Paris, to borrow the sum required for its redemption from the king his brother, he retired to Condé, a town thirty-six miles distant. From thence Monsieur marched and captured the towns of Bins and Maubeuge; but Quesnoy and Landrecy, places which had been assigned to the French as guarantees by the States, refused to admit the duke, and repulsed his efforts to reduce their garrisons. Monsieur then retired to his own castle of Alençon very much

[1] "Ma (ch'era peggio) in quei medesimi giorni con poco respetto della sua persona erano state vendute lesue vassella d'argento, e le sua stalla all'incanto publico, per debito fatto per le sue spese in Mons. Onde sdegnatosi, s'era retirato a Condé."—Viaggio di Lippomano.

chagrined at the issue of the campaign.[1] From thence he addressed a letter to the States of Flanders, stating the cause which had induced him to retire into France, and making bitter complaints of the discourtesy he had met with, after having complied with the urgent entreaty of Lalain that he would repair to Mons. He commented angrily on the conduct of the palatine Casimir, the *protégé* of the English queen, who had declined at his summons to quit Ghent and join the army of the States; and contrasted it with his own zeal, exemplified, as Monsieur stated, by the presence of la Noue and his three thousand mercenaries, who were ready to encounter the veteran hosts of don Juan and the prince of Parma. Monsieur, nevertheless, graciously promised not to abandon the party of the States, and pledged himself to return to Flanders, after having successfully advocated the cause with the king his brother and with Elizabeth queen of England.

From Alençon the duke proceeded to Angers, depressed in spirits, and irritated by the constant feuds raised by the turbulent Bussy d'Amboise, who, on some slight quarrel with Dangeau, another of Monsieur's gentlemen, had challenged and killed his opponent. The duke, meantime, had formed his resolve to return to Paris; he had been made to feel that the united opposition of his mother and brother was a barrier he could not surmount. The silence of queen Elizabeth had testified her resentment at his unauthorized enterprise, and at the jealousies subsisting between himsel and her champion the palatine Casimir. Besides, the death of M. de Quélus removed one grand obstacle against Monsieur's return to the court. The disturbed condition of the northern provinces of the realm con-

[1] MS. Historia tumultuum Belgicorum a discessu Philippi II. Hispaniarum Regis usque ad obitum Francisci Valesii, die 10 Junii, 1584. —Joannes Asseliers, quoted by André, Bibl. des Ecrivains de Flandres.

vinced him of welcome there; as Henry, with much want of tact, had betrayed the greatest apprehension lest his brother should espouse the cause of the malcontents. Monsieur was further induced to make conciliatory overtures to his brother by his chagrin at the conduct of M. de Bussy. When once the hold relaxed by which any favourite had coerced the feeble will of the duc d'Anjou, his fall was immediate. Monsieur knew no medium in his impulses—he became either a victim or a tyrant. With feelings thus alienated, Bussy had given Monsieur deadly offence, while playing together with other cavaliers at a game called *gabbes*, then very popular. This pastime consisted in a vituperative sparring, each personage taunting his neighbour on some defect, mental, bodily, or accidental; a dangerous game at all times, but one especially so when a royal prince condescended to invite sarcastic comment. The duke bitterly lashed Bussy on the ferocious violence of his temper, which, he said, made many shun his society; and then insisted that he should retort, according to the laws of the game. Bussy at first declined; but, irritated by the mocking laughter of his companions, he rashly replied: "Monseigneur, I might be more shunned—for everybody would totally avoid me, if my personal appearance was as ill-conditioned as your own." The duc d'Anjou upon this rose and put an end to the game; for the sneer of the imprudent Bussy had struck keenly. The next day Monsieur sent for Bussy, and coldly informed him that he was about to return to Paris, but should not require his attendance, "as," said Monsieur pathetically, "my former secret flight having occasioned so many false reports and surmises prejudicial to the king my brother, I deem it my duty to dissipate them by returning in the same private manner. You will, therefore, remain here, fulfilling your duties as governor of my fortress of Angers." In accordance

with his resolve, the duc d'Anjou set out for Paris, taking in his suite only M. de Chanvallon and two valets-de-chambre. He reached the Louvre on the night of Monday, March 16th, at one o'clock, and, without announcement whatever, hurried to the king's bedchamber. Not meeting his brother there, he unceremoniously entered the royal cabinet, where he found the king. Villequier, d'O., Joyeuse, and la Valette were leisurely disrobing their royal master, who had just returned from a pilgrimage to the shrine of Notre Dame de Chârtres. Henry gazed for some moments in astonishment on the truant; he then threw his arms round his brother, and shedding many tears, the two exchanged a fraternal embrace.[1] So rejoiced was the king to see his brother, and to be thereby relieved from his fears touching Monsieur's probable proceedings, that he dismissed his gentlemen; and the brothers, after a long and earnest conference, passed the night together, sleeping in the same bed. Monsieur took this opportunity to request his brother's interposition on his behalf in the affairs of the Netherlands, protesting his intention ever to be subject to the crown of France. He represented that if the king fairly embarked in the enterprise, it would be a ready and efficient mode of ridding the realm of France of factious subjects—men whose bread depended on warfare; that the queen of England would gladly aid in driving the Spaniards from Flanders; moreover, that the alliance, offensive and defensive, of France and England with the States, would greatly aid in promoting his marriage with Elizabeth.

[1] Mém. de Cheverny. De Thou, liv. lxviii. Viaggio di Lippomano. "Monsignore stette quattro soli giorni con sua maestà, poi parti per Angers, promettendo, come fece, di tornare in corte. E all'ora ogn'uno restò chiaro che il demonio non è mai così brutto come se dipinge. Di modo che per gratitudine di così pronta e buona volontà sua maestà gli donò più di ottocentomila franchi in manco di due mesi," writes the sarcastic secretary of the Venetian ambassador.

The king demurely promised to give his brother every aid and satisfaction in his power consistently with the welfare of France. He counselled Monsieur to wait the return of queen Catherine before further compromising himself with the States; and, meantime, to sound the English ambassador as to the present dispositions and future projects of Elizabeth, his royal mistress.

The following day the king assembled his council, and communicated the return of his brother, expatiating with satisfaction on the confidence reposed by Monsieur in his fraternal affection. Such was his majesty's joy at this event, that the court during the afternoon proceeded to La Sainte Chapelle, to return thanks to God for this happy termination of the difference between the royal brothers. Henry, moreover, presented his brother with 800,000 francs; this sum was to be paid by instalments during the ensuing two months. Louis XI. was wont to compare his realm of France to a spacious and fertile meadow, the grass of which he plentifully cut whenever he required fodder. The emperor Maximilian I. likened the king of France to a shepherd, the owner of sheep having golden fleeces, which suffered themselves to be shorn whenever he commanded. The unexampled profusion of king Henry, who distributed his gold as if the ocean drifted ingots on his coasts, must have afforded a subject of saddened reflection to his people.

The royal gift, nevertheless, was one at the season peculiarly acceptable to the duc d'Anjou. His wooing of the royal Elizabeth of England had been singularly unprosperous; and her majesty's recent replies to the increased ardour of his suit might, like the Delphic oracles of old, be equally construed to presage victory or defeat. In return for the elaborate and respectful epistles which Monsieur despatched monthly to London, Elizabeth returned high-flown billets teeming with sen-

timent and prudery. The astute princess had many political objects to serve by thus holding Monsieur in suspense. Thereby she rendered the king of Navarre and his Calvinists more submissive to her will, lest in a moment of pique she might abandon their protection, and become the daughter-in-law of queen Catherine. Spain suspended for a brief season her dark conspiracies against the bastard and heretic usurper, fearful for her Flemish provinces, and lest Elizabeth in despair might identify her cause with that of the royal house of France. Henry III., restrained by the hope that at length the diadem of the Tudor princes might circle the brow of his brother, and thereby give the death-blow to the expectations of the Protestants of France, demeaned himself with indulgent courtesy. He refrained from interfering in the affairs of Scotland, or from peremptorily demanding the release of his sister-in-law Mary Stuart. He denounced in his despatches as vehemently as even Elizabeth could desire, the cowardly attempts made upon the life of the queen by Jesuit regicides. He promised to endow Monsieur as the queen should dictate; and engaged to permit the marriage articles to be drawn under the supervision of Cecil and the English cabinet in all matters, excepting in such as might curtail the privileges of Monsieur in respect to the private exercise of his religion. The personal efforts of the duke to propitiate Elizabeth were no less energetic. He sent her verses composed by the king's favourite bard Desportes, presents of the choicest products of his appanages, and made her the gift of his portrait. The libels of the day describe the features of the duc d'Anjou as presenting an aspect hideous and revolting. That Monsieur's figure was diminutive and his face marked by smallpox is no exaggeration; and that he could claim no distinction from beauty of person, even

his mother repeatedly avowed in her correspondence with queen Elizabeth. Nevertheless he was far from being the utterly repulsive object some have represented. "The duc d'Anjou," says the minute and veracious Lippomano, "has an open, jovial expression of countenance; his complexion is brown, and his face marked with smallpox. His beard has only just commenced to grow, and his age is twenty-five. His figure is not tall, but well proportioned. His hair is black and curly, growing high on the forehead, which gives length to his face. The duke does not care for active exercises: he rides sometimes, but without grace. He adopts a very conciliatory demeanour towards the princes of Guise." Perhaps it might have been to contradict the reports everywhere prevalent of his exceeding ugliness, that Monsieur now took the sudden resolve of presenting himself before Elizabeth—at least his subsequent deportment, when at the court of England, seems to warrant this supposition. Some few months previously, Monsieur had accredited his favourite Simier as a special envoy to Elizabeth; and the report sent him by the former was so favourable, that the duke spoke in positive terms of the eventual success of his suit. Henry was not so sanguine, and repeatedly prayed his brother to await the return of Catherine. The duke, however, anticipating vexatious opposition from his mother, and determined at any cost to accomplish his project, quitted Paris secretly; and provided with an ample passport by the English ambassador, he proceeded to Boulogne. Contrary winds, however, detained him there for seven days, when, attended only by Chanvallon and one other personage of note, Monsieur crossed the Channel.

At Melun, meanwhile, an important synod of Roman Catholic prelates assembled during the months of July

and August, 1579, to devise means for the reformation of the church, and for appeasing the troubles everywhere dominant. Henry without due reflection had granted his license for the holding of this assembly. The sagacious Catherine would have observed thereon to her son, that all previous ecclesiastical discussions had but aggravated the evils they sought to reform; and that in the midst of the financial crisis which already had paralyzed every ordinary resource of the government, it were worse than folly to sanction this assemblage of clergy, one of whose avowed objects it was to examine, and perhaps repudiate, the pecuniary contracts of the years 1561-7, entered into with the burgesses of Paris, by which the church had guaranteed the payment of the interest due on the city debt.[1] The queen, unfortunately, was absent: this synod, therefore, assembled. After some brief discussion, the bishop of Bazas was deputed to remonstrate with the king on the shameful misappropriation of ecclesiastical revenues. Henry returned a conciliatory answer, and promised reform. Two days subsequently the synod deputed l'Angelier, bishop of St. Brieu, coolly to propose to his majesty the immediate publication of the canons of Trent and the abolition of the concordat of Francis I., in order to transfer again the right of election to vacant bishoprics and abbeys from the king to the chapters. The long-suffering of Henry even was not proof against the insolence and presumption of these demands, and he angrily dismissed the prelates. The next measure of the synod, after entering a protest against the arbitrary proceedings of their sovereign in matters ecclesiastical, was to examine the financial contracts guaranteed on the revenues of the Gallican church; and for the liquidation of the interest upon which, the tenths of certain benefices had been devoted. After much factious dis-

[1] Les rentes de l'Hôtel de Ville.

cussion, it was unanimously resolved "that the clergy of the realm, having sufficiently discharged the obligations contracted by them during the years 1561-7, repudiate all further obligations and claims."[1] This decision was duly notified to the municipality of Paris. A violent tumult raged in the capital when this act became public. The holders of the bonds disowned by the prelates, enraged by this dishonest breach of contract, assembled in armed bands, and perambulated the capital, calling on the people to rise and emancipate the country from the yoke of both king and priest. The provost of the merchants, la Perreuse, at length proceeded to the Palais de Justice to request the interposition of the Chambers, as the tumult hourly became more menacing. The parliament promptly responded, on the motion of Augustin de Thou, and issued decrees summoning the recusant prelates to the bar of the Chamber to prove their right to annihilate the compact concluded between the church and the state, and authorizing their arrest if found even beyond the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris. These prompt measures saved the capital: the people laid down arms, and waited the result. The prelates, members of the synod of Melun, protested in consternation against this bold invasion by the civil power on rights ecclesiastical and prescriptive; nevertheless, they were compelled to submit, after obtaining letters of evocation, which transferred the hearing of their plea from the Chambers to the Council of State. Eventually a compromise was effected, the assembly of Melun agreeing for the space of ten years to continue to discharge the financial en-

[1] "On mit les comptes au net, et l'avis général de l'assemblie fut enfin, que le clergé avait suffisamment satisfait aux obligations portées par ces contrats, et qu'ils ne les engageoient plus. L'acte de cette resolution fut dressée le 15 d'Octobre, et l'assemblée le fit signifier par un huissier 11 de Decembre au prevôt des marchands, et aux échevins." —De Thou. liv. lxviii

gagements contracted in the States of 1561.[1] Thus everywhere throughout the realm assemblies were being convened to attempt to set aside the acts of former years and to enter into fresh leagues, often having only a local action, in order to harass and coerce the government. The leading member of each of these petty leagues aspired to the title of regenerator of the realm, as minister of state. Gradually, nevertheless, these political sections were one after the other absorbed in the mighty confederation gathering under the banner of Spain and the Church. It was the secret mission of La Sainte Ligue, during the period between the closing of the States of Blois in 1578 and the year 1585, to foment the religious hates, to foster the assemblages of the factions of a district, to elevate one grievance sharp and defined in character, above the seething mass of general disaffection, and then to withdraw further support. The local malcontents, therefore, fearful and irresolute, soon eagerly gave in their adhesion to the Great League, with its princely leaders, perfect organization, and strength.

The king, notwithstanding his grave altercations with the synod of Melun, found leisure, during the absence of the duc d'Anjou, to avenge on M. de Bussy the misdemeanours which had incurred the royal hatred. The duc d'Anjou had never forgiven his former favourite the taunting speech or the arrogant demeanour, which had so greatly moved his anger, during his late sojourn at Angers. Bussy, at this period, was carrying on a correspondence with the wife[2] of Charles de Chambres, comte de Montsoreau, grand-huntsman to M. d'Anjou. During the early days of the recent reconciliation between the king and Monsieur, Bussy wrote a confidential epistle to his master detailing this intrigue, and

[1] De Thou. See last note.

[2] Marguerite de Maridos.

in which he used the expression, "that he had at length completely lured the grand-huntsman's hind into his net." The king was permitted by his brother to peruse and retain the letter. No sooner, therefore, had the duke embarked for England, than his majesty summoned M. de Montsoreau, and placed Bussy's epistle in his hand. The count forthwith returned home, and while holding a dagger at his wife's throat, compelled her to write and appoint an interview with Bussy at La Coutancière, a lone castle, a league distant from Saumur. Bussy fell into the snare: he was admitted to the apartment of the countess, and was there encountered by her husband and a band of men-at-arms. A desperate conflict ensued, in which the bravery and skill of Bussy insured him a temporary advantage even when fighting against assailants so numerous. Bussy at length fearlessly sprang from a window of the apartment, and undoubtedly would have escaped, as he had received only a slight wound during the fray, had not his coat caught upon an iron hook which projected from the wall beneath. Perceiving his advantage, Montsoreau approached, and passed his sword through the body of his victim as Bussy hung suspended over the courtyard. The assassination of Bussy d'Amboise produced not the slightest sensation at court; nor could his relatives, powerful as they were, procure the arraignment of his murderer. A few witty epigrams on the mode of Bussy's death; a parody on his favourite boast "that, though born only a simple gentleman, he had the heart of an emperor;" and the religious profession of madame de Montsoreau, were the sole consequences of the tragedy.[1] Brantôme asserts that the king directly exhorted Montsoreau to avenge his honour; and not

[1] Vie de Bussy d'Amboise. Brantôme: Hommes Illustres. Viaggio di Lippomano. Fortune de la Cour, liv. iii. Discours de M. de Bussy-Rabutin à ses Enfants.

only promised him immunity after the contemplated crime, but a substantial reward in case he succeeded in slaying M. de Bussy.

These varied excitements, and the responsibility of government, which during Catherine's absence weighed heavily on the king, brought on a severe attack of illness. Henry was assailed with violent neuralgic pains in the head; and an abscess formed in his majesty's ear, attended by the same symptoms as he had suffered before under a similar seizure, soon after his accession. During several days Henry continued so ill, that couriers were despatched by Cheverny and Villequier to the queen-mother, who was then at Lyons, and to the duc d'Anjou, summoning them to return without delay to Paris, as the issue of the king's sickness was uncertain. Subsequently Henry himself wrote to contradict this statement, demonstrating much annoyance at the hasty intimation, "as," said his majesty, "of all my late maladies, there now only remains to me but a bad toothache!"[1]

Queen Catherine, during these transactions, had been pursuing her negotiations in the south. Bellegarde met her majesty, as had been promised by the duc de Savoy, at Monluel; and after an ineffectual attempt to justify his treasonable seizure of Saluzzo, demonstrated so palpable a resolution not to make restitution, that the queen, deeming the preservation of peace more important than the assertion of the king's right in this affair, granted the marshal letters-patent confirming to him the marquisate under the title of his majesty's lieutenant. Still Catherine had failed in a very im-

[1] After this illness the king's hair fell off, and he continued to suffer severely at intervals from headache. The royal physicians, therefore, advised his majesty to keep his head shaved, and to wear a cap à la Polonnaise, which he was never to remove, even during the celebration of mass.

portant part of her mission, which was to reconcile the king with his powerful subject Damville, and to persuade the latter to break his vow never to confer personally with his sovereign. The queen's anxiety to achieve this purpose was greatly augmented, when, during her sojourn in the south, news arrived announcing the decease of Damville's elder brother, the maréchal de Montmorency, who expired at Escouan, May 6th, 1579, without leaving issue.[1] That event which Catherine had once so dreaded had come to pass—the chief of Montmorency, formidable from his wealth, his alliances, territory, and from even the chivalrous impulse imparted by the utterance of that renowned name, was at variance with the crown, and refused to bend the knee in homage before the grandson of Francis I. In disposition the new duc de Montmorency resembled his father the constable—stern, matter-of-fact, practical, and not to be deluded by professions, he steadily resisted the queen's sophistry. He resolutely refused to quit his government, but assured the queen that his majesty would ever find him a loyal subject, and a supporter of the one orthodox faith. He hinted that the time might be at hand, when Henry would thankfully turn to the support of a faithful subject whose sword might avail him; and he plainly avowed that he had no desire to contend with the *valetaille* which ruled his majesty, or to become the competitor of Guise for the allegiance of the Parisian populace. With these bold words the duke took leave of her majesty, and proceeded to join the king of Navarre at Mazère, where an assembly of Protestant prelates and warriors had been convoked.

Montmorency did not visit Mazère to share in these

[1] The maréchal de Montmorency espoused Diana de France, the legitimated daughter of Henry II. and widow of Horace Farnese duca di Castro, grandson of pope Paul III.

conferences; his object was to present a remonstrance from the States of Languedoc against the military enterprise of certain of the reformed churches; and to demand that his chastisement of these individuals should not be deemed an infraction of the convention still existing between the party of Les Politiques and the Calvinists. The duke also demanded the restitution of several towns in Languedoc, tendered to the Calvinists as a guarantee of the good faith of their allies of the orthodox faith. Montmorency's first demand was conceded; the latter met with peremptory rejection.

After the departure of Montmorency, the religious conferences of Mazère commenced. The deputies of the churches took a gloomy view of their position and prospects; and the discussion consisted but in a regretful retrospect of the former condition of Béarn under Jeanne d'Albret, and a complaint that the Edict of Poitiers, and the Articles of Nérac were disregarded, and the Calvinists, as before, defrauded of their privileges. This statement could not be controverted by the king of Navarre: the government of Henry III. had not power to compel general obedience to an obnoxious edict in favour of the heretics, when the most ordinary exercise of its authority was disputed and usually thwarted. War, therefore, was predicted by all to be again imminent. Such being the opinion of the members, the king of Navarre, towards the termination of the conference, rose and called forth Dupleix, deputy for the reformed churches of Languedoc, and Calignon, deputy for the churches of Dauphiny. Henry then, resolved to be prepared for every emergency, broke in their presence two gold pieces, the half of which he gave them to carry, the one to M. de Châtillon, eldest son of the amiral de Coligny, and the other to M. de Lesdiguières, with a message from him to the

effect, "that whoever should hereafter bring them the corresponding halves of the crowns was commissioned by him to impart the day and the mode in which immediate hostilities were to be re-commenced."[1] The assemblage then separated; and thus, before Catherine reached the capital, the foundation was laid for fresh calamities, and her mission of conciliation had been pronounced a failure.

The queen began her journey towards Paris about the commencement of the month of November, 1579. The king and queen set out to meet her majesty at Orléans, the greatest joy being exhibited by all parties at this auspicious re-union. The duc d'Anjou, meanwhile, had returned from his visit to the court of England; and though in high good humour at the reception he had there received, yet a coldness had again risen between himself and the king. Instead, therefore, of proceeding to Paris, Monsieur retired in high dudgeon to Alençon, and from thence had intimated his intention to travel forwards and meet his royal mother at Nevers. As soon as Monsieur, however, ascertained that the king and queen were also preparing to greet Catherine, he despatched a courier with excuses and a long letter of explanation to his mother detailing his grievance; which, it appears, related to the displeasure expressed by the king at his sudden journey to England, and at the elevation of the king's new favourites.

Catherine was greeted with enthusiasm on her route to the capital.[2] "The queen-mother," says a contemporary, "is a princess of most indefatigable spirit, born

[1] De Thou: Mém. de Sully. Pérefixe: Vie de Henri le Grand. Le Grain: Ibid. Mezeray: Vie de Henri III. Dupleix.

[2] On regarda la reyne comme ayant assez gaigné en ne faisant aux Huguenots aucune concession en matière religieuse, et en ne leur accordant point une chambre de parlement ainsi qu'ils le demanderent.

to govern a people so volatile and inconstant as this." She was received a league from the capital by the parliament of Paris, the municipality, and by the members of the high courts. The people rejoiced at Catherine's return, and demonstrated their satisfaction by vehement cheers; for it was felt that, much as the past sway of the queen-mother had been deemed worthy of deprecation, yet that the future welfare of France depended on her sagacity, firmness, and knowledge of affairs.

The queen alighted from her coach in the court of the Louvre, having been absent from Paris, on her mission of pacification, during the period of eighteen months.

CHAPTER III.

1579 — 1580.

Journey of the queen to Angers—Details of the journey made by the duc d'Anjou to the English court—His return to Paris—Banquets given by the chancelier de Birague and other nobles—Affair of the Sarbacane—Its results—Disaffection of the great nobles of the realm—Catherine claims the crown of Portugal—She nominates M. de Strozzi as admiral of the fleet sent to support her claims—Madame de Tende—Passion of Strozzi for that lady—Treachery of the king to defeat the designs of Strozzi, and to avenge himself upon queen Marguerite—La Guerre des Amoureux—The duc d'Anjou accepts the title of duc de Brabant—Conferences of Fleix—Visit of Monsieur to the court of Nérac—He marches for the relief of Cambray—Elevation of MM. de Joyeuse and la Valette—Their extraordinary favour—Marriage of the duc de Joyeuse with Marguerite de Lorraine—Festivals of the court—Extravagant luxury of Henry III.—Relief of Cambray by the duc d'Anjou.

Queen Catherine remained four days in Paris to repose after the fatigue of her southern progress, and then departed for Alençon to visit her son the duc d'Anjou, and, if possible, to adjust his misunderstanding with the king.

Catherine found the duke elate with the honours and flattery conferred upon him at the English court, and sanguine as to the ultimate success of his suit. He declared himself deeply enamoured of Elizabeth, and spoke rapturously of her personal charms, and of the beauty of the fair English maidens of her court. Elizabeth had received her juvenile suitor with cordiality and magnificence. His matrimonial overtures she accepted

with reserve, never giving a negative to his importunities, nor yet suffering him to feel that such professions were unwelcome. She invented all manner of pretexts to delay her decision; sometimes declaring her intention of being solely guided by the advice of her privy council and parliament; at others coquettishly demanding the written assent of the king and the queen-mother of France to Monsieur's suit; then an assurance from the duke that she never had had any rival in his affections. The vivacity of the duke's discourse pleased Elizabeth, and they soon became on most familiar terms. The queen took her royal suitor to her palaces of Greenwich and Richmond; she entertained him at Hampton Court and Windsor; and during their private converse asked Monsieur many pertinent questions relative to the court of France and its leading personages. Every morning the queen, *sa belle maîtresse*, as the duke affected to term Elizabeth, brought Monsieur a cup of soup, which she presented with her own hand; while, effectually to disabuse Elizabeth's mind in regard to the stories current, attributing to him a spinal deformity, the duke condescended to submit himself one day to the queen's scrutiny clad in a tight jerkin of flesh-coloured silk.[1] The duke's presents to the courtiers were on a most regal scale; and during his brief residence in London, his expenditure amounted to the sum of 600,000 francs. The English nation, however, was averse to the alliance, which, moreover, encountered the opposition of Leicester and Hatton. A libellous pamphlet, called the 'Gaping Gulf,' was published by one John Stubbs against the queen's marriage, in which

[1] "Si disse ancor che la regina gli portava la mattina il boglione a bevere di sua mano, e che monsignor s'ora mostrato a lei in giuppone d'ermesino incarnato for farle vedere che non era gobbo, come l'era stato referto."—Viaggio di Girolamo Lippomano, Ambasciatore en Francia, l'anno 1577-1583.

not only was Monsieur ridiculed, and his pretensions confuted, but inconvenient revelations were made respecting the profligacy of the king of France and the orgies of his court. Stubbs was apprehended by Elizabeth's command; and so greatly was her majesty incensed by the libel, that he expiated his indiscreet zeal by the loss of his right hand, imprisonment, and exposure in the pillory.

On the duke's return from England he bestowed the post of governor of the castle of Angers on Simier, latterly his envoy to the queen of England, which office was vacant by the decease of Bussy d'Amboise. The tidings that Villequier had been nominated to the important command of governor of Paris and the Isle de France; on the decease of the maréchal de Montmorency, occasioned Monsieur extreme displeasure. This appointment, and the chagrin which the duke experienced at the rising power of Joyeuse and la Valette, and at the execution of one la Primaudaie, an adherent who was sentenced to death for assassination, are supposed to be the chief causes which had again alienated Monsieur from his brother. The peevish resentments of the duke, his undignified mode of manifesting displeasure, and his inconsistent abandonment of it at the first opportunity which suited his private interest, daily diminished his influence. The self-esteem of the duke was intense; this foible soothed and flattered, he became as pliant as could be desired in the hands either of Catherine, the king of Navarre, or Montmorency, according to the political bias of the moment. The duke had assumed for his device a sun shining on the earth in full splendour, with the motto, "*Il échauffe, et il dissipe.*" Never was there a device more inapplicable. Instead of dissipating the clouds of faction, Monsieur's jealousies and puerile passion, and his pandering now with one party and then another, though ever faithless

to the throne, emboldened the designs of the house of Lorraine, which were fostered by these dissensions; while the depreciating comments of Guise and his adherents, relative to the royal brothers, acquired irresistible credit, when, during their periodical feuds, his majesty and Monsieur were in the habit of interchanging the same vituperative accusations.

The year 1580 opened with a round of festivities. Henry kept with great solemnity the anniversary of his order of the St. Esprit, and conferred its grand cross on his brother the duke, who, yielding to the entreaties of Catherine, had accompanied her back to Paris. The cardinal-chancellor Birague also offered a splendid banquet to their majesties on the occasion of the baptism of one of his nephews. This feast is memorable, in gastronomic annals, from its wonderful display of meats and confectionery: there were twelve hundred dishes of marvellous device, castles, pyramids, and groups of knights and ladies, all moulded in sugar, and interspersed with magnificent trophies of silver plate. A riot amongst the pages and lacqueys occurring after the royal party left, the greater part of the plate was stolen, and the cardinal's valuable porcelain dishes were broken in the conflict. During the following few weeks, Henry partook of a series of banquets given to him by the cardinal de Guise, the duc de Nevers, and the lords de Lenoncourt and de Villequier. Catherine also offered his majesty a magnificent fête at the Tuileries, at which the duc d'Anjou was present.

An adventure happened at this period at court, which created more sensation and confusion than if the combined armies of Damville and the king of Navarre had been marching upon the capital. Three of the most distinguished ladies of the court, the duchesses de Montpensier and de Retz, and madame de St. Luc, ashamed of its profligate renown, combined in a plot to

awaken the king to a sense of the turpitude of his conduct. They also mahaged to enlist the aid of MM. de St. Luc and Joyeuse, the leading favourites. The character of St. Luc was naturally refined; his disgust at the royal debaucheries he was compelled to share was often intense, and therefore he readily promised co-operation. Madame de St. Luc, besides, passionately represented to her husband the disgrace of his weak subservience to the vices of his royal master, the wrong he was inflicting on the queen, and the power which such conduct placed in the hands of the queen-mother. "If you succeed, monsieur, in a righteous endeavour to direct his majesty from such vicious courses, can you doubt that your present power will be increased, and that the king will not eventually value more the service which you will have rendered him, than the vile applause which you now bestow upon his shameful licence? You know the temper of the king, and are aware that, when satiated by pleasures, he is overwhelmed by remorse. Voluptuous to excess, his majesty is also devout to superstition. His heart is divided between pleasures and pious exercises; he seeks expiation for the former through the latter. The king's weak point, therefore, is his excess of credulous devotion: attack his majesty, therefore, by that foible; make him dread the dire judgments of an offended Creator, and rule him by his fear of eternal vengeance!" The words of his wife produced a salutary impression on St. Luc, and determined him to join heartily in any device likely to arouse the conscience of the weak and effete monarch. Meanwhile, the project was carefully broached to M. de Joyeuse by the duchesse de Retz. The illustrious descent of de Joyeuse rendered it difficult for him to brook the presumptuous familiarity of many of the cavaliers of Henry's band. Gallant, honourable, and sincerely devoted to his master, Joyeuse wished to rid the court

of the sycophants, whose misdeeds and rapacity brought odium on the royal name. His co-operation in the fanciful scheme of the ladies was therefore cordially given. After much consultation, madame de Montpensier procured a tube of brass, which St. Luc, whose chamber was adjacent to that of his majesty, agreed to introduce by perforating the wooden partition into the alcove, close to the king's bed, and through which he was to whisper denunciations of the Divine wrath. Accordingly one night Henry was roused from slumber by a voice close to his ear, uttering words of reproachful admonition. The king at first paid little heed to the sounds, believing that he had been dreaming, but again composed himself to sleep. Again a hissing whisper caused his majesty to start from his pillow. Appalled at the supernatural sounds, the king now feeling assured that he was addressed by an angelic messenger of Divine wrath, listened in an agony of apprehension and awe. After a time the mysterious voice ceased, and Henry calling his *valet-de-chambre* from the ante-room, cast himself from his bed on the floor, and remained in that attitude of humiliation until dawn. When the hour arrived for admission to the royal apartment, the usual reckless and dissipated band waited to give his majesty their accustomed *réveille-matin*. But the king, with wan and downcast countenance, passed through the midst without accepting greeting whatever, and entered his private cabinet, the door of which he shut. St. Luc, charmed at the success of his stratagem, presently asked to speak to the king on very important matters. He was admitted with Joyeuse and la Valette. Taking his royal master aside, St. Luc then pretended to confide to his majesty the terrible apprehension which had befallen himself during the night, when, he said, an angel armed with a flaming sword had appeared by his bedside, and in a voice of awful menace commanded

him, under pain of eternal damnation, to renounce his profligate career, and use his influence with his majesty to exhort him to repentance. Henry received this statement as a confirmation of his own vision, which, however, he did not impart to his favourite. When night approached, the king, overpowered by his superstitious fears,[1] retired to the apartments of queen Louise, and dispensed with the attendance of those whom his spiritual visitant had adjured him to discard. For several nights subsequently, however, St. Luc plied his tube, his nocturnal admonitions being sedulously strengthened by the exhortations and concern expressed by Joyeuse, by queen Louise, and by his majesty's confessor the bishop of Auxerre; for both these latter personages believed in the reality of the supernatural visitation.

The king's depression became at length so visible, while his reluctant horror at even hearing his former exploits alluded to, so disconcerted the profligate cohort, and convinced the cavaliers of their speedy dismissal, that M. d'O, Villequier's bold and unscrupulous son-in-law, resolved to extract his majesty's secret. He commenced by likewise feigning reformation. Henry, in his newly-aroused anxiety and zeal, sought to confirm the salutary impression on the mind of this cavalier by imparting to him the circumstances connected with his visitation. M. d'O had now obtained the knowledge he sought in order to elucidate the mystery. He thereupon instituted so careful a watch, that he discovered the stratagem of M. de St. Luc, and presently revealed his discovery to the king, and even showed his majesty the tube used to transmit the sounds to the royal chamber. Henry's compunctions of conscience

[1] "Le roi devint tout à coup si peureux qu'au moindre coup de tonnerre il se cachoit sous les lits, et sous les basses voûtes du Louvre." —Aubigné.

immediately evaporated in a transport of rage, and he decided to inflict a prompt but stealthy vengeance on the offenders. Some few weeks previously the king had given St. Luc the government of the town and citadel of Brouage: this command he resolved quietly to resume, before banishing his former favourite from the palace. Accordingly Henry secretly summoned the nephew of Villequier, M. de Lanscome, and commanded him to post to Brouage, and close the gates on St. Luc, whenever he should attempt to take possession of his government. St. Luc, however, was instantly apprized of the discovery of the plot and the king's meditated retaliation by the duc de Guise, who, through his sister madame de Montpensier, had been cognizant of the design of the ladies, which he ridiculed as chimerical. The duke sent to assure St. Luc of his protection, and advised him to depart without delay and make himself master of Brouage, as his life was in peril. When Henry learned that M. de Lanscome was the party repulsed before the walls of Brouage, having arrived there seven hours later than M. de St. Luc, his anger was indescribable. He commanded the immediate arrest of madame de St. Luc, who was conducted to the Bastille. His majesty, moreover, caused the seizure of the papers and property left by M. de St. Luc in the capital. As for M. de Joyeuse, Henry accorded him a full pardon for his share in the deception of the *Sarbacane*, as he had taken no active part in the nocturnal *ruse*. The duchesses de Montpensier and de Retz were personages of a rank too lofty, and of connexions too powerful, to dread any public manifestation of the king's wrath. These two learned and witty ladies were, however, constrained to acknowledge that there were disadvantages to be calculated in incurring the resentment of a monarch inspired by impulses so wily—one who actually piqued himself on the

rude violence of his deportment towards the ladies of his court.[1]

Thus did the king alienate from his service St. Luc and his kindred of the house of Espinay; all of whom, to the close of this reign, either openly or tacitly favoured the designs of M. de Guise. The imprisonment of his daughter, madame de St. Luc, did not conciliate the maréchal de Cossé-Brissac, who felt his sympathy kindled in a greater degree by the indignant comments of Guise on Henry's harshness, than by the taunting sneers of his sovereign. The house of Balsac-d'Entragues,[2] similarly alienated by the king's persecution, had been drawn towards the princes of Lorraine by an expression of like sympathy in their wrongs. Thus insensibly, one after the other, the great feudal houses of the realm were detached from their allegiance to the Valois. In the year 1580, before the decease of the duc d'Anjou had opened that vast arena for political speculation, and before the adhesion of queen Catherine to designs tending to subvert the established order of succession, imparted a royal sanction to the efforts of the malcontents, the great houses of Montmorency, Créquy, Vendôme, and Albret—represented by the king of Navarre—la Marck, Lorraine-Guise, la Tremouille, Condé, Cossé-Brissac, la Force, Châtillon, Turenne, and la Rochefoucault, to which, before the year closed, were added the names of de Retz and Nevers—had openly repudiated and denounced the government of Henry III. To these potent names, numbers of influential and rising families—such as those of la Chastre, de Lary-Bellegarde, Estrées,

[1] De Thou, Dupleix, Aubigné, Journal de Henri III., Mathieu, Brantôme, and numerous other contemporary authors relate at length the affair of the Sarbacane, which created great excitement throughout the realm. There are also many manuscript relations in the Bibliothèque Impériale.

[2] D'Entragues was the slayer of M. de Quélus, and was for many years the object of Henry's especial persecution.

Humières, &c., houses which in the following century represented many of the ancient baronies—had also seceded, disgusted at the favouritism shown at court, and at the vices of the sovereign. Moreover, the spirit evinced by the Gallican church towards Henry III. was hostile, factious, and subversive to a degree never before demonstrated in French annals. The prelates cordially despised the pusillanimous monarch, who neither dared to stand forth as their orthodox champion nor as the protector of the reformed churches of the realm. With zealous energy they defended their own temporalities, and mocked at the puerile and ineffectual attempts of the sovereign to appropriate the substance of the laity. At the death, therefore, of the duc d'Anjou, the youngest of Catherine's sons—an event which opened the succession to the heretic house of Bourbon-Vendôme—the troubles which ensued on the consequent development of this mass of disaffection, and by the clashing of the great principles of reform with the prescriptive rights of the papacy, might almost infallibly have been predicted. The loyal adherence, nevertheless, of the *tiers-état* to the crown would probably have averted the coming catastrophe. The people, whose political influence had been fostered by Louis XI. and ground beneath the sternest of despotisms during the reign of Francis I., again vigorously re-asserted their supremacy. During the period of the civil wars, anterior to the massacre of Paris, the people, confounded at the anarchy everywhere prevalent, and at the alternate ascendency of the policy advocated by the queen-mother, by Guise, and by Antoine de Bourbon, followed blindly in the wake of the favourite leader, occupied in hot discussions on religious theories rather than in the dissection of political codes. The consequent exhaustion of the national finances, however, restored to the masses a due appreciation of their political rights. The established imposts already were regarded

as insupportable burdens, when the penury of the government compelled an attempt to double the existing taxation. The church proffered the most penurious of aids: while the dissensions of the court threatened repeated outbreaks of the war. The people, therefore, rose to repel these prospective exactions; and as the States of Blois not only refused to permit the imposition of additional imposts, but actually proposed the sale of church temporalities and the compulsory mulcting of the great nobles, to ease the burdens of the state, an able monarch, foreseeing the approaching depression of the two highest orders, would have sought the support of the *tiers-état* by wise and timely concessions in matters religious and political. Henry, however, only shed maudlin tears, listened in consternation to the presumptuous voice of those whom the edicts of his grandfather designated as "*manants et villains*," and dismissed the deputies in confusion. More wary, and a better politician, Guise banded them in his League by his affected sympathy for their pecuniary and social wrongs.

During the summer and autumn of the year 1580, a great project occupied the attention of queen Catherine and the duc d'Anjou—nothing less than to establish the right of Catherine de Medici to the crown of Portugal. On the death of Sebastian I., king of Portugal, at the battle of Alcazar, the last legitimate male representative of the house of Avis was the cardinal Henry, third son of Emmanuel the Great, and of Maria, daughter of Ferdinand and of Isabel of Spain. To prevent the realm from falling into anarchy, and in the hope of arranging the impending disputes relative to the succession, Henry had ascended the throne in 1578. This precedent of a crowned cardinal was not lost upon the French Leaguers. On the last day of January, 1580, the cardinal-king expired at Lisbon, leaving a will executed eight months previous to his demise, be-

queathing the diadem to the candidate who should be declared its true heir, after a rigorous examination of the claims of all pretenders before the council of state. The most noted of these were—first, Philip II., king of Spain, in right of his mother, the empress Isabel, eldest daughter of Emmanuel the Great; secondly, the son of the eldest daughter of the duc de Guimaraens, brother of the cardinal-king, Ranuzio Farnese, heir of Parma;[1] and, thirdly, Catherine duchess of Braganza, youngest daughter of the duc de Guimaraens. By the laws of ordinary regal succession, the prince of Parma ought undoubtedly to have been declared heir to the crown; but his mother, the duchess Marie, was dead, and the great statute of Lamego excluded foreigners from the succession.[2] Amongst the immediate kindred of the cardinal-king, the competition, therefore, remained between Philip II. and Catherine, duchess of Braganza, who was the nearest surviving representative of the duc de Guimaraens, and the consort of a Portuguese prince. Two other competitors, nevertheless, preferred their claims: Louis, prior of Crato, the illegitimate son of the duc de Beja, an elder brother of the deceased king, but eligible for the succession by the law of Lamego; and queen Catherine de Medici, whose right was stated altogether to supersede that of the late reigning house. The queen claimed the succession in

[1] Eldest son of Alexander Farnese, the great duke of Parma, viceroy of the Low Countries, whose mother Marguerite, duchess of Parma, was the illegitimate daughter of Charles V. Alexander, duke of Parma, left three children by Marie de Guimaraens: Ranuzio, who succeeded to Parma on the death of his father in 1592; Oduardo, a cardinal; and Marguerite, married, and ultimately divorced by Vicenzio Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, who then married Eléonora, the sister of queen Marie de Medici.

[2] The king of Spain, moreover, refused to entertain the claims of the son of his famous general; and even forbade the duke of Parma to commence any negotiation with the States of Portugal, to obtain the recognition of the rights of his young son.

right of her maternal ancestors of Boulogne. Alphonso III., king of Portugal, in the year 1280, it was stated on the queen's behalf, married for his first wife Mathilde countess of Boulogne. Mathilde was repudiated after she had borne her husband a son named Robert, in order that her faithless spouse might marry the illegitimate daughter of the emperor Don Alonso X. of Castile. From the son of the countess of Boulogne the house of la Tour d'Auvergne lineally descended, which ended in the direct line with two co-heiresses, Madelaine and Anne—the one espousing Lorenzo de Medici, the father of Catherine, the other the duke of Albany, by whom she left no offspring. Catherine, therefore, was the sole representative of the discarded son of Alphonso III.; while the reigning line descended only from the son of that prince by Doña Beatriz, whose posterity had thus usurped the Portuguese crown. The claims of the queen-mother were pompously paraded before the Supreme Council of Appeal; but that august tribunal proved to the satisfaction of the remaining competitors that Mathilde, first consort of Alphonso III., deceased without issue; and though the house of Boulogne incontestibly descended from Robert I., he was not the child of queen Mathilde, but the son of her sister Louise. It was in vain that Catherine declared her anxiety to cede the Portuguese crown to her son M. d'Anjou, her petition was summarily rejected. Catherine, therefore, determined to send a fleet to Lisbon to maintain her right, under the command of M. de Strozzi. The Portuguese, meantime, rejected the claims of Philip II., on the plea that, while the heirs and representatives of the duc de Beja and Guimaraens, the brothers of the empress Isabel, existed in the persons of the prior of Crato, whose illegitimacy, by the law of Portugal, was no bar to the succession, and of Catherine, duchess of Braganza, the king of

Spain could have no title to the Portuguese realm. Philip, however, marched an army under the command of Alba upon Lisbon; and bidding the Portuguese remember that the right of the Spanish monarchs to the crown of Portugal dated from 1383, when the inheritance of Doña Beatriz, consort of John I. of Castile, and heiress of Peter the Cruel, king of Portugal, was usurped by her illegitimate brother after the bloody battle of Aljubarrota, he challenged the nation to transfer its allegiance to himself, the lawful sovereign. Catherine de Medici, therefore, with great complacency beheld the outbreak of a civil war in Portugal, which, at any rate, she trusted, would cripple the resources of Philip II., and facilitate the projects of the duc d'Anjou on the Low Countries.

But before Strozzi set out with his squadron to defend the somewhat legendary claims of queen Catherine on the Portuguese crown, he became the victim of one of Henry's most heartless perfidies. Strozzi was the son of the maréchal Pietro Strozzi;[1] and in consequence of his father's alliance with the Medici, had been treated with distinction at court. During the recent residence of the queen-mother at Toulouse, he had been several times the bearer of the confidential correspondence between the king and his mother. On one of these visits to the court of Nérac, Strozzi became enamoured of Madelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne, the beautiful sister of Turenne, and the widow of the comte de Tende. Aware that his alliance with the great Huguenot house of la Tour would probably be distasteful to the king and his mother, Strozzi dutifully tried to vanquish his passion for the fair widow, but without avail. At length he confessed his attachment to Henry, and

[1] The marshal Strozzi was killed by a cannon-ball at the siege of Thionville in 1558. The marshal was the son of Clarice Strozzi, the aunt of Catherine de Medici, and daughter of Pietro de Medici.

earnestly implored the royal permission to prefer his suit. Henry coldly replied, "that he would confer on the subject with the queen his mother." Strozzi's application to his royal master was made soon after Catherine's return to Paris. The king, meanwhile, had continued to foster the most intense resentment against the queen of Navarre. The frequent correspondence which was still persevered in, between M. d'Anjou and Marguerite, filled the king's mind with the direst suspicion and jealousy. The knowledge, also, that couriers often quitted the hôtel de Guise for the court of Nérac tended little to restore the royal equanimity. Marguerite's apparently prosperous reunion with her husband, and her friendly relations with Condé, greatly annoyed Henry. He trembled lest Marguerite might negotiate an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the king of Navarre, M. d'Anjou, Guise, and Condé. The reports which from time to time reached the capital, respecting the joyous revels of the court of Pau, filled the king with envy; for his sister was tranquil, and apparently happier than she had ever been whilst an inmate of the Louvre. The king, therefore, resolved to attempt to destroy Marguerite's domestic happiness, and, consequently, as he trusted, her political influence, which he conjectured held close affinity. The incident of Strozzi's passion for the sister of Turenne, therefore, inspired the king with an abominable project for creating the disunion he desired between Marguerite and her husband; and for effectually arresting the former in his pursuit of madame de Tende. It happened that Catherine, when discussing with the king the circumstances of her visit to the territories of her son-in-law, accidentally mentioned the admiration with which Turenne had regarded her daughter. This hint was sufficient to kindle the wanton surmises of the king. Accordingly, without the knowledge of his mother, who

was at this period absorbed in the details of her Portuguese expedition, Henry sent for M. de Strozzi, and formally gave him permission to seek Madelaine de la Tour, and also to proceed to the court of Nérac. After Strozzi's gratitude had been sufficiently expressed, the king, with an air of amiable condescension, produced a letter addressed to the king of Navarre, which he gave to Strozzi, charging him on his allegiance to deliver it personally into Henri's hand. The royal mandate was, of course, faithfully obeyed. When opened, the letter contained the most infamous charges, accusing Marguerite and the vicomte de Turenne of a criminal intrigue, and warning the king of Navarre against their perfidious designs—the whole written in the king's handwriting. The sagacity of the king of Navarre interpreted the base manœuvre; and, perhaps, never had he before adequately valued the *entente cordiale* which then subsisted between himself, Marguerite, and M. d'Anjou, as he now did on witnessing the depth of meanness to which the king had condescended, to subvert it. Early the following morning, therefore, Henri, accompanied by Turenne and Strozzi, entered the apartment of the queen of Navarre, and suddenly laid the letter before Marguerite; but at the same time expressed his contempt for, and disbelief of, such an accusation. Dismayed and overwhelmed at having been made the instrument of a charge so scandalous against the brother of the woman whose favour he came to win, Strozzi vehemently protested his ignorance of the contents of the royal epistle. His assurances might have been received, had Strozzi been willing to accept the test unanimously proposed by Turenne, Marguerite, and the king of Navarre—that he should quit the service of the craven-hearted monarch who had shamefully betrayed him on a point which no man of honour could pardon. Reluctantly, therefore, Strozzi, faithful to the son of

his royal patroness, queen Catherine, resigned himself to the alternative—his ignominious dismissal from the court of Nérac, and the renunciation of his attachment to madame de Tende, by whom he was not even permitted an interview of farewell. Dejected, irritated, and humbled, Strozzi returned to Paris to assume the command of Catherine's armada; and, had he lived to revisit France, he also, probably, would have been found ranged amongst Henry's foes.[1] Turenne, who was a very model of chivalry, sensible of the evil rumours which might attend any present intercourse with queen Marguerite, and also, out of deference to the feelings of the king of Navarre, requested the command of Henri's troops in Upper Languedoc, and under this pretext temporarily withdrew from Nérac. In the heart of Marguerite, however, the desire for vengeance glowed with vivid and steady strength. On her knees, and with passionate fervour, she vowed a signal retaliation.

The queen, to embellish her southern home in imitation of her mother, had surrounded herself with a galaxy of beautiful women. These Marguerite enlisted in her vengeance. Catherine de Bourbon, her husband's sister, regretted the absence of Turenne; Madelaine de la Tour owed Henry III. no kindly feeling for the loss of so wealthy and gallant a suitor as Strozzi; mademoiselle de Torigny remembered the sack, and her threatened immersion in the Seine by the king's brutal troopers: in short, there was scarcely a lady in the train of queen Marguerite who had not some insult to avenge. All, therefore, united in promoting the projects

[1] Additions à l'Histoire de M. de Thou, tome viii. Amyrant: Vie de la Noue, p. 154. Marsolier: Hist. du Duc de Bouillon, p. 102, in 4to. Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III., p. 459. L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III. Dupleix: Hist. de France. Mongez: Vie de la Reyne Marguerite. Bayle: article Navarre.

of their royal mistress; the ladies disdaining the *devoirs* of any cavalier who deprecated a renewal of the war, and treating such as poltroons and unworthy knights. The perfidy of the king, his falsehood and oppression, were themes perpetually on the lips of the fair dames of Nérac. Marguerite added fuel to the flame by her indignant denunciations and her warlike exhortations to the minor chieftains of the Protestant league, whose prosperity was promoted by warfare. Perceiving that her husband was attracted by the charms of mademoiselle de Fosseuse,[1] Marguerite, forgetful of her pique in her zeal to gratify her resentment, instructed the former how to inspire warlike ideas into the mind of the king of Navarre, and promised her protection as a guerdon. Mademoiselle de Fosseuse proved an apt pupil, and fully realized the expectations of her instructress. The queen then addressed herself to Turenne. She expatiated on the cowardice of receiving so gross an affront from the hand even of a sovereign; and she challenged him, while vindicating his own honour, to defend her fame. To her husband the queen preferred a formal demand to be put in possession of the counties of Agen and Quercy—a territory which had been assigned as her dowry, and most unjustifiably detained by her brother. "The court of Nérac," says Aubigné,[2] "was adorned by cavaliers of valiant honour, and by ladies of exquisite beauty; but luxury soon generated vice, as the heat of the sun hatches serpents."[2] The queen of Navarre soon polished up all wits, and taught her husband this notable maxim, "that a cavalier, when not enamoured, is like a body without a soul." We have before adverted to the intense hate borne by the queen of Navarre towards her brother the king. To satiate

[1] Françoise de Montmorency, daughter of the marquis de Thury, baron de Fosseuse.

[2] Hist. Universelle.

this hatred, and to cause a renewal of the war, this most artful princess promoted the passion which her husband at this period began to entertain for la Fosseuse, a maiden of fourteen years, in order that the latter might prepare his mind for her designs. She next seduced the goodwill of divers ladies served by the most valiant cavaliers. She herself gained over the vicomte de Turenne; and soon they discoursed together upon nothing save the renewal of the war. Thus was this war resolved upon, which from these circumstances was termed "la guerre des Amoureux."

Whilst affairs remained in this precarious condition, Henry III. imprudently despatched envoys to the king of Navarre, with a demand that the towns yielded to the Huguenots, as guarantees of the edict of Poitiers, should be restored. The royal ambassadors met with the most unceremonious treatment at Nérac, and were dismissed with a positive refusal. The coquettes of the court jeered at these unfortunate envoys, and made them the victims of the most malignant jests. All hostile preliminaries having now been well-nigh exhausted between both parties, the king of Navarre despatched Aramont to carry the halves of the gold pieces broken at Mazère to Châtillon and Lesdiguières, the signal for the outbreak of war; and himself resolved to invest Cahors, the capital of queen Marguerite's county of Quercy. The capture of Cahors is one of the most brilliant episodes in the career of Henri the Great. The valour and military ability of Henri were here especially manifested, and his claims to the title of a Great Captain recognized by his countrymen. Cahors was defended by M. de Vesins, governor of Quercy, and a garrison of two thousand picked men. Henri, one morning, followed by his brave generals Saligiac, Gourdon, and Roquelaure, made a sudden descent upon the devoted town. As they approached

Cahors the sky became darkened, and rain commenced to fall in torrents attended by thunder. The brave little band, nevertheless, resolutely proceeded, leaving behind, however, many stragglers, who were appalled at the fury of the tempest. They advanced to the principal gate, which they stormed, and actually carried, unknown to the townsmen, who were deafened and confused by crashing peals of thunder and by the falling torrents of rain.[1] Once within the town, Henri was instantly confronted by de Vesins and a detachment from the garrison, consisting of as many men as could be thus hastily collected. A fierce conflict ensued, in which de Vesins was so severely wounded as to incapacitate him from further command. The inhabitants then threw up barricades of barrels and furniture, and stretched chains across the streets. The fight continued to rage with unabated fury, every inch of ground being disputed at the sword's point. Despite the desperate resistance of the inhabitants of Cahors, supported by their garrison, the king of Navarre made triumphant progress. Detachments of royal troops, which had been sent from Cahors by de Vesins to intercept succours marching to the aid of the assailants, were beaten by Roquelaure and an officer named Pierre de Chouppes. Henri's white *panache* was seen always towering where the fray raged thickest. Sword in hand, his exploits of valiant daring roused the courage of his troops, so as to render their assault irresistible. No quarter was given or taken—the blood of the Huguenots, which had been shed in Cahors after the massacre of Paris, had to be avenged. Street by street was entered and captured by the brave Béarnnois; and

[1] Davila, liv. vi. De Thou, liv. lxxii. This storm is recorded as having been especially fraught with disastrous consequences. Great extent of territory was thereby inundated, and much damage done to the harvest and vintage in various districts in the south.

after a fight which lasted from nine in the morning until nine at night, the flag of Albret floated over the captured city. Cahors, the capital of queen Marguerite's county of Quercy, however, no longer existed; the churches had been fired, the houses burned, the college —the last resort of the townsmen, and where they had made a final attempt to entrench themselves—was riddled with shot, and the roof battered in. Never was there a more deplorable sight witnessed than the utterly dismantled condition of a city which, twelve hours previously, had been flourishing; nor could an example be quoted of a more gallant victory than that gained by Henri de Navarre, even in this era of civil conflict. Several smaller towns were captured by Henri; and Montaigu in Poitou likewise fell. In Languedoc, Châtillon seized the towns of Lunel, Aigues-Mortes, and Sommières; in Dauphiny, Lesdiguières drove the royal garrisons from some insignificant places of the principality.

Henry beheld the renewal of the war with feelings of mingled incredulity and dismay. For long he could not be persuaded that the king of Navarre had actually espoused the quarrel of "sa grosse Margot," as his majesty generally called his sister. The proceedings of the duc d'Anjou then became a source of considerable disquietude to the king: to propitiate his brother, therefore, who, on hearing of the insult offered to his sister, had threatened in a rage to leave the court, the king sent Monsieur letters-patent investing him with the title of lieutenant-general of the armies of France, which were presented by Villeroy. His majesty then wrote to the king of Navarre an earnest expostulation on the folly of his proceedings; and predicted, as it came to pass, that the war, not having been undertaken for the confirmation of the edicts, and for the extension of the reformed faith, but only to satiate the private

vengeance of his consort, the Gallican churches would not countenance or support the campaign. To this missive Henry added a second, addressed to queen Marguerite. He therein threatened her with his eternal vengeance, if she did not prevent the military enterprises of her husband, or at any rate act in such fashion as to convince the privy council that she deplored them.[1] Marguerite, in reply, wrote to the king, innocently assuring his majesty that he had been altogether misinformed, and that the king of Navarre meditated no enterprise that she knew of, hostile to the crown. She had, moreover, the audacity to commission the chancellor of her counties of Agen and Quercy, M. de Pibrac, to tender the same protestations. When news reached the court of the actual capture of Cahors, the king's indignation was greatly kindled: he sent for Pibrac and harshly reproached him in presence of the court, and even menaced him with imprisonment.

The Huguenots of France, though they despatched envoys to congratulate the king of Navarre on his brilliant exploit at Cahors, yet declined to arm for his support. The Calvinists of the provinces of Normandy, l'Isle de France, and Champagne refused to contribute either men or money, on the ground that the cause of the war was personal, and regarded only the king of Navarre and his consort: and that, though in defence of their religious liberties the confederates were willing to sacrifice everything, yet that to obtain payment of queen Marguerite's dowry, or to avenge her differences with the king, was not deemed by the churches a legitimate cause for the renewal of hostilities. The inhabitants of La Rochelle, by the counsel of La Noue, returned the same response. The prince de Condé, whose

[1] MS. No. 720, Catalogue de Verdet, 30 Janvier, 1854. Lettre de Pibrac à la Reyne Marguerite de Valois. Guessard, tome i.

rigid morals rendered him a severe censor of the levity of Marguerite's proceedings, refused to take part in the war which she had kindled; nevertheless, he availed himself of the opportunity to quit St. Jean d'Angely, and suddenly returning to his government of Picardy, entered La Fère, despite the royal prohibition.[1] Leaving a garrison to hold the place in his behalf, Condé then quitted France to confer with the queen of England and the Protestant princes of Germany, to negotiate a new league, having for its single object the extension of the reformed faith. This unexpected move on the part of Condé gave the king more concern than the actual hostilities in the south. Supported alone by his own subjects—a section merely of the Huguenots of the realm—Henri of Navarre, it was foreseen, could not sustain the war on his own resources. Condé, however, while disavowing participation in the pending warfare, was unwittingly performing the part of a trusty and able ally towards his kinsman of Navarre, in recruiting amongst the Protestant states for those very levies, the interposition of which might effectually prevent the royal power from resuming its ascendency in the south. The marshal Biron was, therefore, promptly despatched to put down the rebellion in Guyenne; the duc de Mayenne assumed command of the army sent to check the enterprises of M. de Lesdiguières in Dauphiny; while the maréchal de Matignon departed to besiege La Fère, in order to deprive Condé of his single stronghold in Picardy.

The arms of Biron, in Guyenne, soon checked the progress of the king of Navarre. After several weeks

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxii. "M. le prince étant à La Fère envoye vers le roy l'avertir de son arrivée, s'excusant de ce qu'il avoit entrepris cela sans son commandement, sur la crainte qu'il avoit que sa majesté eut plutôt deferé aux persuasions de M. de Guise qu'à ses prières, mais qu'il n'était là pour rémuer, mais pour faire tout ce qui lui seroit commandé."—Mém. du Duc de Bouillon.

of warfare, in which the marshal captured most of the places which had fallen, he defeated a body of 3000 men close to Monterabel, and pursued the fugitives to the very gates of Nérac. Queen Marguerite and her court had taken refuge in Nérac, which was strongly fortified, and able to hold out during a long siege. The queen, curious to behold Biron's army as it defiled past, stationed herself on the ramparts, near to one of the gates of the town. The royal army passed close under the ramparts of Nérac, when a division suddenly halted, and fired three volleys of artillery at the gate of the town by way of *bravade*, the balls striking the wall close to where the queen was standing. The queen retired with the greatest precipitation.[1] Biron, however, had incurred the personal resentment of Marguerite de Valois; though, when afterwards expostulated with for his useless *fanfaronnade*, he averred, and probably with truth, that he was not aware of the queen's presence on the wall of the town.

Another frivolous dispute during these transactions convulsed the court, which took its rise in some indiscreet revelations made by the duc d'Anjou respecting a conversation which he had holden with the duc de Montpensier at Angers in the spring of the year. The subject of discourse was Monsieur's flight from court in the year 1575. The duke observed "that he felt deeply indebted to the ducs de Montpensier and de Nevers, who had been commanded by the king to intercept his progress; that they had preferred rather to mediate between his majesty and himself than literally to execute the

[1] Davila. Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite. De Thou. Mezeray. Dupleix: Vie du Maréchal de Biron. Bazin: Notice sur la Reyne Marguerite. The town of Nérac, it had been agreed, was to be respected as the refuge of queen Marguerite, so long as the king of Navarre refrained from visiting the place. A few days previously Henri, in his anxiety to see mademoiselle de Fosseuse, had violated this agreement. Hence arose the assumed right of Biron to fire on the town.

orders issued." The duc de Montpensier, however, as has been related, had absolutely refused to bear arms against the brother of his sovereign. Montpensier, therefore, piqued that no higher meed of praise was assigned to him, replied by imparting the facts to Monsieur, adding "that M. de Nevers had exhorted him to intercept Monsieur at the head of the army of Poitou on the banks of the Loire, when the said duc de Nevers proposed to join him with troops under his command." This conversation, being afterwards repeated by the duc d'Anjou, came to the ears of the duc de Nevers, and aroused his indignation as a cowardly attempt on the part of Montpensier to injure him in the good graces of the heir-presumptive. When the former was informed of the anger of Nevers, he addressed to him a letter in which he recapitulated the discourse which he had holden with the duc d'Anjou, and defied any man to disprove a single statement. The duc de Nevers upon this wrote to the duc d'Anjou, requesting his permission to proclaim that individual, however august his rank, a liar and defamer, who presumed to declare that he had "sought or entered into a conspiracy to take the life or liberty of his highness." Believing that his honour was compromised by this manifesto, the duc de Montpensier prepared to vindicate himself by arms; the usual resort at this period after the most trivial misunderstanding. But as the rank of both the parties, their age, and services, rendered a personal combat inexpedient, their quarrel was espoused by their kindred and allies. The duc de Guise and his brothers declared for the duc de Montpensier, the husband of their sister Catherine de Lorraine, who was herself no insignificant ally in her lord's quarrel. The prince of Orange,[1] with

[1] The prince of Orange had espoused for his third wife Charlotte, daughter of the duc de Montpensier, the ex-abbess of Jouarre, whose apostacy and marriage her father had not forgiven.

his kindred of Nassau, sent a solemn deputation to the duc de Montpensier, making many professions of devotion, and offering his sword to defend the duke against the foul aspersions of Nevers. On the other hand, the duc de Clèves and Juliers[1] offered himself as the champion of Nevers, whose cause was vehemently espoused by his brother the duke of Mantua. The quarrel having thus assumed formidable dimensions, compromising almost all the nobles of the realm as kinsmen or allies of the antagonists, Catherine thought it time to interfere, especially as the king and his brother, who were then reconciled, deemed it a pastime highly diverting to watch the progress of the feud. Her majesty therefore sent for the aggrieved parties, and formally interdicted recourse to arms. She then discoursed apart with the duc de Nevers, who, as a countryman of her own, the queen had always favoured and trusted. Catherine, therefore, demanded from the duke, as a return for her past favours, that he should heartily join in propitiating Montpensier, who, as a prince of the blood and the brother-in-law of the duc de Guise, possessed influence which might become formidable to the throne. The duke, therefore, shortly afterwards published a manifesto, in which he disclaimed any imputation on the honour of the duc de Montpensier, and explained that he had applied the terms "liar and slanderer" only to the person who should venture to affirm that he had compassed the death of M. d'Anjou. The duc de Montpensier, sternly admonished, on the other hand, by the queen, declared himself satisfied with this explanation; and the two late opponents met

[1] The duke of Clèves was the near relative of the duchesse de Nevers, who was the representative of the French branch of the house of Clèves descended from Engilbert de Clèves, the son of John duke of Clèves and Isabel de Bourgogne, comtesse de Nevers.

in Catherine's saloon, and embraced in presence of her majesty.[1]

France, during the months of June, July, and August, 1580, was visited by the plague, and by a singular epidemic which the French termed "*coqueluche*."[2] These two maladies caused fearful mortality, especially in Paris and in the town of Laon. The epidemic first showed itself in Italy, where the supreme pontiff, Gregory XIII., one of its victims, narrowly escaped death. From Italy the disease ravaged Spain, and carried off at Badajos Anne queen of Spain, consort of Philip II. It next spread over France, where hundreds fell before its ravages. Its symptoms seem to have somewhat resembled those of the influenza of the nineteenth century. The king and his mother suffered from a severe attack—a sickness which prevented his majesty, as it was alleged, from taking the command of the army sent to besiege La Fère. The favourites Joyeuse and Epernon, however, set out for the camp, followed by sumptuous equipages and by a retinue of royal magnificence. So great was the luxury of the camp before La Fère, and so feeble the resistance offered by Condé's garrison to the overwhelming force under the command of Matignon, that the siege was ever afterwards termed *le siège de velours*.[3] When the place was on the point of capitulating, the duc de Guise arrived in camp; a visit resented by Matignon, who believed that the duke had repaired thither with the malicious intent of depriving him of the barren glory of terming himself conqueror of La Fère! This feud might so far be termed a fortunate

[1] Mém. de Nevers, tome i. pp. 83, 85, &c.

[2] This malady seems not to have been the hooping-cough, which is now called "*coqueluche*" by the French.

[3] M. de Joyeuse at this siege lost seven teeth, which was the severest injury inflicted on any of the young cavaliers.

incident, that at least it secured one competent general for the royal cause in its subsequent contest with the League.

The war in Guyenne and on the confines of Béarn, meantime, consisted merely of a series of skirmishes and the capture and reconquest of small castles and towns, the advantage being generally on the side of the royal arms. Nevertheless, the military resources of the king of Navarre were exhausted, and his hopes of foreign succours dissipated by the return of Condé, who had failed in his negotiations with the Protestant powers of Europe. The sovereigns, though willing to aid their co-religionists of France and the Low Countries, yet desired to treat with the confederates as a body, and not with one section or party. Condé, therefore, after conferring with Lesdiguières in Dauphiny, returned to St. Jean d'Angely, after undergoing innumerable perils in his journey through Switzerland to avoid the royal armies. The palatine Casimir was the only potentate who had shown the least inclination to levy troops for foreign service; to him, therefore, the king of Navarre, hotly pressed by Biron, was about to apply, when propositions of peace were unexpectedly made through the duc d'Anjou. Marguerite de Valois would scarcely have dared to betray her husband into a single-handed contest with the realm of France, had she not relied on the influence possessed by Monsieur, and on his solemn promise to interpose whenever requested so to do by his sister or by her husband. The queen had now satiated her resentment. The war which she had provoked, it was true, had not redounded to the glory of her husband, save in the one instance of the triumphant capture of Cahors; but the gloom of the court of Béarn, deprived of its cavaliers and festivities, was beginning to exercise a depressing influence on her spirits. Consequently Marguerite hailed with

transport the project of a visit from the duc d'Anjou to negotiate articles of accommodation.

Anxiously as the duke desired to gratify his sister, many personal motives prompted him to negotiate a peace. The affairs of the Low Countries again monopolized his attention. The States-general had despatched a second embassy during the month of August, 1580, again to petition the duke to take up arms to deliver them from the "tyranny" of Spain. The Flemish envoys found Monsieur at Plessis-les-Tours, and after some conferences a treaty was signed, in which the States, after solemnly declaring Philip II. deposed and deprived of his sovereignties in the Low Countries,[1] recognised the duc d'Anjou as their sole and legitimate sovereign. It was stipulated that all privileges, charters, and immunities should be confirmed by the duke, and that only Flemings born should be nominated to offices in the government. Until the duke was invested with, and in full possession of, his ducal dignity, the States covenanted to pay him the monthly sum of 300,000 silver crowns; but that six places only should be delivered into his hands to receive French garrisons, besides all towns subdued by his arms. The duke, furthermore, guaranteed the maintenance of religion as he found it. This treaty, so advantageous to the duke's aspiring designs, received the approbation of Catherine, who therein beheld the accomplishment of the prediction which had given her such disquiet that all her sons should wear diadems. Partly by the persuasions of Monsieur, and partly overpowered by the decided tone

[1] The States-general of Holland made a public renunciation of their allegiance to the king of Spain, at the Hague, July 26, 1581.—Traité conclu le 11 Septembre entre le duc d'Anjou et les Etats-généraux des Pays Bas: MS. Bibl. Imp. Gaignières, pp. 99, 400. Don Juan of Austria died in October of the year 1578, when Farnese, prince of Parma, was elevated to the vacant dignity of viceroy.

in which Catherine alluded to the approaching departure of the duke for the Netherlands, Henry acquiesced in the election of the States. On all sides it was repeated to his majesty that the war in the Low Countries would drain his own realm of fractious and unruly spirits; and that both Roman Catholic and Protestant would unite in confirming the possession of a province, so fertile and so wealthy, to a son of France. The king loathed the very mention of civil war; nevertheless, dissensions in the state seemed always on the increase—the poison which lurked in the brimming cup of luxury ever raised to the royal lips. Even the orthodox of the realm had now caballed together against the zeal displayed by certain members of the Gallican church; and a wearisome controversy rang in the ears of the king relative to the publication of the famous papal bull *In Cœnâ Domini*. This decree principally defined the astounding pretensions of the papacy, and set forth, amongst other articles, the assertion that the vicar of Christ possessed the inherent right of excommunicating all civil magistrates who maintained that the temporal power of the prince might check or annul the enterprises of the church. This bull was secretly introduced into France, and published by several bishops and priests in the southern provinces—the arena where all hostile manifestations against the state were tested. The parliament of Paris, however, interposed, and passed a mandate interdicting the publication of the bull *In Cœnâ Domini*, and authorizing the seizure of the temporalities of any see where the obnoxious decree had been propagated by the assent of its bishop.[1] The duc de Guise, to the infinite surprise of his royal master, joined in protesting against the ultramontane zeal of these churchmen, and heartily denounced the decree as pernicious to the welfare of the realm. Harassed by these vexa-

[1] Registres du Parlement de Paris. De Thou. Mezeray.

tious broils, Henry suffered himself to be persuaded to authorize the visit of the duc d'Anjou into Guyenne, once more to go over the old ground of negotiation discussed at the conferences of Millaud, Beaulieu, Poitiers, and Nérac. The king, however, insisted that this concession should be regarded as one made purely and simply at the prayer of M. d'Anjou, in order to promote his campaign in the Low Countries. "France and the royal will," said his majesty, "were still potent enough to chastise the insolent rebellion of the Béarnois!" Monsieur justly appreciated the valiant arms of the Huguenot chieftains, and foresaw with what ardour they would enlist under his banner to fight for the religious liberties of the Netherlanders against the great foe of reform Philip II. The king, moreover, agreed to connive at the raising of levies of men throughout the realm, provided that he should not be expected to sanction the invasion of Spanish Navarre by his brother-in-law: he promised also to furnish a stipulated sum of money, to be placed at the disposal of Monsieur.[1] To all these measures the king yielded a reluctant consent: he did not participate in the sanguine hopes expressed by Catherine, that the intervention of the duc d'Anjou in the affairs of Flanders would divert from France the subtle intrigues of the Catholic king, or break Philip's alliance with the princes of Lorraine. Neither did Henry believe the protestations made by Monsieur relative to his popularity in the Low Countries; and frequently the king taunted his brother by allusions to the devotion which had permitted his effects to be put up to public auction in the town of Mons. In a letter written by the king at this season to the duc de Montpensier, he deplores his brother's pertinacious interference in the affairs of the Netherlands; and states his belief that Monsieur exaggerated the attachment of the

[1] Registres du Parlement de Paris. De Thou. Mezeray.

Flemish.[1] Notwithstanding these strong convictions of the inexpediency of his brother's proposed demonstration, Henry had the weakness to risk the welfare of his realm and the alliance of Spain rather than combat the importunity of the duc d'Anjou, or the ambitious aspirings of Catherine de Medici.

The treaty signed at Plessis-les-Tours with the envoys of the States, the duc d'Anjou departed in haste for the south. He first repaired to the castle of Fleix, in Périgord, appertaining to the marquis de Trans, who had lost two sons in the skirmish near to Monterabel. Monsieur was there joined by the duc de Montpensier, the maréchal de Cossé, and by Bellièvre. In spite of this display of diplomacy, there were no points to discuss; a few conferences were holden for the better elucidation of the edict of Nérac—a little disputation ensued, when these articles were again for the third time solemnly countersigned. Henri of Navarre resigned all his recent acquisitions, and in exchange for Cahors accepted the towns of Figeac and Montségur.[2] It was felt, however, that some concession must be made to the resentments of Marguerite de Valois; and when by her command Turenne, as it is supposed, demanded the dismissal of the maréchal de Biron from his office of lieutenant-governor of Guyenne, her majesty's desire was not opposed. It accorded with the inclinations and present interests of the royal brothers to conclude a peace with the king of Navarre

[1] The king says:—"Je redoute infinyment l'issue du voyage que mon dit frère a entrepris de faire en Flandre, pour le peu d'occasion que j'ay d'estre asseuré de la bonne volonté que luy portent ceux qui l'y ont attiré; lesquels ne tendent qu'à se conserver aux depens de cet état, et de la reputation de mon dit frère; lequel estant transporté de courage et desire de gloire ne reconnoit le peril où il se trouve." — Lettre de Henri III. au duc de Montpensier, Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8824, vol. lxx. Paris, 7 Février, 1582.

[2] Davila, tome xi. p. 92. Mém. du duc de Bouillon.

and to conciliate his consort; the claim, therefore, of the general, whose success had insured the ascendency of their policy, was not permitted to intervene. The convention of Fleix was immediately ratified by Henry, who, on account of the ravages of the plague, had quitted his capital for a sojourn at Blois. The duc d'Anjou then proceeded to Nérac, where he spent several months, enjoying the society of his sister queen Marguerite, to whom the duke appears to have been most sincerely attached; and in organizing levies for the immediate relief of Cambray, which place was sharply invested by the Spaniards. All the chief cavaliers of the court of Navarre, as had been anticipated, fired with martial ardour, volunteered to march under the duke's banner. Turenne, reconciled to Monsieur by the good offices of Marguerite, demanded permission to follow the fortunes of his ancient master. The duke requited his sister by commanding the maréchal de Biron to offer a humble apology to the queen of Navarre[1] for his late disrespectful defiance. Biron complied, and then consented to take the command of the duke's Flemish army. The king, however, when his permission to this arrangement was requested, positively refused his sanction. Henry's mind continued for several months in a miserable state of vacillation. Early in the year (1581) his majesty received a missive from the king of Spain, by a messenger sent direct from Madrid. Philip sharply reproached the king for his inconsistency and insincere expressions towards Spain, his majesty adding, "that as soon as he should hear of the advance of the duc d'Anjou to the Flemish frontier, he would grant the demands of the rebels, and command the duke of Parma to make a descent upon France." Missives also reached the duc de Guise from Philip, in which that astute monarch reproached the duke for his

[1] Mém. de la Reyne Marguerite.

inaction, and reminded Guise that, if the reformers of the Low Countries succeeded in establishing their faith, heresy would never be expelled from the realm of France. The effect of this remonstrance from his potent ally was evidenced by the immediate despatch of letters from the king to all the governors of provinces, prohibiting the further levy of men for other service than that of the royal army. The imperial ambassador, moreover, waited upon Henry to present his master's protest against the duke's expedition, a thing which it would be impossible for the emperor to countenance. The king peevishly replied, shrugging his shoulders, "that he had nothing to do with the project of M. d'Anjou, and that he took not the slightest interest in the said expedition, otherwise affairs long ago would have borne a different aspect in Flanders. M. d'Anjou never consulted him, but always acted according to his own good pleasure."[1]

In such fashion passed the spring and part of the summer of 1581, the favourites of the king still filling the court with jealousies and broils. Henry loved to promote these disputes; their adjustment afforded his indolent mind just the requisite degree of excitement; and he revelled in the servile homage paid him by his favourites. Joyeuse and la Valette, however, still retained their omnipotence; M. d'O had the next largest share of influence. Since the decease of Quélus, Maugiron, and Bussy, however, brawls in the streets of the capital had been less frequent: the cavaliers of the suite were now compelled outwardly to adopt the bearing of the leading favourite, and Joyeuse, being truly valiant as well as refined, discountenanced such tumults. Nevertheless, enough of the old leaven of insolence and mendacity remained in the band to render its members ready at the command

[1] Lettres de M. de Busbec, Ambassadeur de l'Empereur Rodolphe II.

of the king to commit any kind of profanation or slander. The ladies who, during the spring of 1581, were the victims of the king's heartless pastimes were mademoiselle de la Mirande and the duchesse de Nevers. The former, having been for long insulted by the addresses of Philibert comte de Grammont, whose own wife was the mistress of the king of Navarre, was lured by the royal connivance into Henry's private cabinet under pretence of speaking with his majesty, and there found herself alone with Grammont. Mademoiselle de la Mirande was then left to her own resources, far from all assistance, to escape as she could from the interview.[1] The way in which the duchesse de Nevers incurred the enmity of Henry III. is not exactly known, as in the affair of the princesse de Condé, her sister, she appears to have been his stanch ally. The deportment of madame de Nevers had been, on the whole, as irreproachable as that of any of the leading ladies of the court. Her buoyant and merry temper rendered her universally popular, and the *entrée* to the hôtel de Nevers was eagerly sought for. The gay and fascinating little duchess held a sway over the Parisian circles peculiarly her own. The guests of the duchesse de Montpensier assembled to hold political *réunions* in her splendid saloons, and to pay their homage to the Minerva of the League, whose pungent speeches, decision, and learning inspired an awful reverence in the majority of her hearers. The couch upon which madame de Montpensier usually reclined, at these receptions, on account of her slight lameness, was surrounded by the leading statesmen of the day. Nevers, Cheverny, Mayenne, Villeroy (then only a humble *secrétaire de commandements*), all eagerly listened to the eloquent *tirades* and fierce energy with which Catherine de Lorraine declaimed against the abuses of the government

[1] Bibl. Imp. MS. Dupuy, vol. xl.

and the morals of the court. Near to the head of the couch, close to his sister, often stood Guise, of whom men now began to speak mysteriously and to watch suspiciously. His graciousness of demeanour, according to the relation of the Venetian Lippomano, was not to be surpassed. "Duke Henry," says he, "is the same age as the king, only taller and better formed. His appearance is most majestic: he has lively eyes, hair of a light colour and curled; his beard is light and exquisitely trimmed, and he is gloriously marked on the cheek by a scar. In all bodily exercises he is admirable. No one can approach him in the art of fencing. His rare virtues and accomplishments cause even his enemies to respect him."[1] In the saloons of the duchesse de Montpensier the chief prelates of the realm also assembled—that learned, eloquent, rapacious, and factious throng; men who aided in preparing the events which overthrew the dynasty of Valois, but who, nevertheless, were the blind instruments of the ambitious designs of Guise and Philip II. his patron. All these bowed before the footstool of madame de Montpensier, applauding her daring religious speculations and her undisguised contempt for the king; and flattering her by acquiescence, when the intellectual face of the duchess lighted with enthusiasm while she descanted on the lofty destinies of the princes of the house of Lorraine.

Another great rallying-point for the disaffected, as also for the great nobles of the realm, was the hôtel de Guise, where the duchess received twice in the

[1] Tasso (tomo ii. p. 267) says of the duc de Guise:—

"E vieppiù de' narcisi e de' ligustri,
Fai quest' almo paese adorno evago,
Fior di valore e d'arme, e di speranza
Per ch' altri cerchi peregrino errante
La bella Europa ove'l dì poggi o'nchini,
Meraviglie maggior de'biondi crini."
Non vide ancora, o de si bel sembrante."

week. Madame de Guise, though she adorned her lofty rank by a spotless reputation and a demeanour gracious and refined, was not an *esprit fort* like madame de Montpensier. While Catherine de Lorraine laid her commands on her consort, despite his years, his royal blood, and military renown, her sister-in-law demeaned herself towards the "great duke" with unquestioned deference, and sedulously promoted his political interests. In the saloons of his consort the duke brought together the rich *roturiers* of the capital—the wealthy merchant, the eloquent advocate, besides many influential though inferior members of the municipality of Paris who possessed not the privilege of *entrée* to the Louvre. So utter a disregard of the great barrier of "caste" was in the sixteenth century a thing unheard of and exceptional. The rich citizen, therefore, who obtained through the saloons of the hôtel de Guise a glimpse of that *terra incognita* the court, returned to his home fascinated by the condescension and affability of his host, and prepared on the first opportunity to shout with the multitude "Vive Guise!" Here also the duke received the eloquent cardinal de Givry and Espinac, archbishop of Lyons, both eventually fiery partisans of the League; d'Ossat—then just admitted into the priesthood—learned, shrewd, and subtle, and perhaps imbibing lessons in diplomacy, in which art he ultimately became so unrivalled a master, from the skilful tact of Guise; du Perron, the zealous adherent of the king, and preacher-in-chief to the fraternity of White Penitents; and Ste. Foy, bishop of Nevers,[1] whose zeal for royalty had inspired him with courage to pronounce a public panegyric on Maugiron, St. Mégrin, and Quélus. Learned jurisconsults also frequented the hôtel de Guise; some devoted adherents of

[1] The bishop of Nevers, after the decease of Henry III., became a violent partisan of the League.

Lorraine, such as Etienne de Neuilly and Brisson; while de Thou, Pasquier, Nicolai, and Commendon were loyal subjects of the crown.

Another of the leading *coteries* of Paris at this season was that presided over by the duchesse de Retz. Her mansion in the Rue de la Cerisaie was the hôtel Rambouillet of the sixteenth century. There all the learned of the capital resorted. Sonnets, *jeux d'esprit*, and dissertations without end, were laid at the feet of the graceful and witty duchess, to be by her publicly criticised or applauded. At her *soirées* madame de Retz was frequently heard to discourse fluently with the English, Spanish, and Venetian ambassadors in their own language, and then suddenly address some profound scholar of the Sorbonne, speaking the purest Attic or Latin. At the hôtel de Nevers, however, learned disquisitions were interdicted, and politics at discount. The vivacious duchess Henriette entertained her guests with dancing, tableaux, and by the many courtly pastimes then in vogue. The king, therefore, constantly honoured her hôtel with his presence. With the exception of the alleged love episode, between madame de Nevers and the comte de Coconnas during the reign of Charles IX., no evil rumours had sullied the fame of the former; although Henry, who loved to lower the reputation which seemed a tacit reproach to his own excesses, had laid many snares for the duchess. At length his guileful project succeeded so far, that during the spring of this year he trepanned madame de Nevers into an epistolary correspondence with M. d'O, one of the chamberlains. These billets were treacherously given to the king by his favourite. To avenge some unknown affront which the duchess had given him, the king in the midst of a splendid ball at the Louvre called madame de Nevers aside, and leading her into the midst of a group composed of his chamberlains

and of several ladies whose reputations were compromised, he read aloud the letters written by the duchess to the individual with whom she had been lured to correspond.[1] This scandalous device, as may be supposed, alienated for ever the allegiance of the duchess and her kindred. Madame de Nevers resigned immediately her office of *dame du palais* to queen Louise; and from thenceforth politics also became the pastime of the duchess Henriette, whose saloons during the last years of the reign of Henry III. were thronged with malcontents. Much of the acrimony displayed by the chieftains of the League arose not so much from the dread of beholding a Huguenot monarch on the throne of St. Louis, as from intense and undissembled hate to the sovereign, whose mandates, even when acknowledged to be beneficial, were often rejected solely because they were edicts promulgated by his authority.

The favourites Joyeuse and la Valette now monopolized all the favour of the king. To prevent their preeminence from being in future disputed, Henry determined to elevate them by titles and matrimonial alliances above competition. As soon, therefore, as the duc d'Anjou had departed on his expedition to the Netherlands, Henry commenced his projects of aggrandizement. It was in vain that queen Catherine besought her son to reflect well ere he offended his nobility by authorizing two cadets, although of noble lineage, to claim precedence above the holders of peerages won for the most part on the battle-field. Cheverny likewise entreated his majesty to reward his favourites more in accord with their pretensions and merits, and hinted that MM. de Guise, Nevers, Mayenne, and Montpensier would indignantly resent such a project. The old cardinal de Bourbon emerged from the castle of Gaillon,

[1] Déréglemens de Henri III. : MSS. Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, vol. xl.

his delicious retreat in Normandy, to expostulate with the king. Henry, however, was inexorable. M. de Joyeuse was the first recipient of the benefactions of his infatuated master. Henry proposed to queen Louise that her sister Marguerite de Lorraine should become the consort of Joyeuse, who traced descent from the royal house of Vendôme. Having secured the assent of the queen, and of mademoiselle de Lorraine, the king despatched an envoy, Henri de Mesmes, to Nancy, to make a formal demand for the hand of the princess from her cousin the duc de Lorraine. The following day, Thursday, September 7th, Henry signed letters-patent erecting the viscounty of Joyeuse into a duchy, with precedence above all other peerages excepting those enjoyed by the descendants of princes of the blood, or by the issue of sovereign houses.[1] The favourite on the same day repaired to the Palais himself to present these letters-patent for registration, accompanied by the ducs de Guise, d'Aumale, M. de Villequier, and others. The answer of the duc de Lorraine being favourable to the alliance between Joyeuse and Marguerite de Lorraine, the king proceeded next to examine the financial prospects of the august pair. The maréchal de Joyeuse, the father of the newly-created duke, who beheld with amazement the favour lavished on his son, possessed a fortune too mediocre to permit of his own habitual residence at court, and therefore he was unable to present his son with lands or appanage. The marshal, moreover, resented the abandonment by Joyeuse of the bride affianced to him from childhood, Marguerite de Chabot, a rich heiress, and the eldest daughter of the

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 888, fol. 111: Villeroy au Roy, avec réponse du Roy en marge à chaque article. Registres du Parlement, et de l'Hôtel de Ville. Dreux de Radier: Reines et Régentes de France. Vie de Louise de Lorraine.

comte de Charny. The king, however, never having suffered any obstacle to interfere with his will, proposed the marriage of mademoiselle de Chabot with the cousin of the bride-elect, Charles de Lorraine, son of the duc d'Elbœuf. The princess Marguerite, by the will of the comte de Vaudemont her father, was entitled only to the sum of 25,000 crowns. The duc de Mercœur, however, at the suggestion of the king, agreed to increase his sister's dowry to 100,000 gold crowns, on receiving from Henry a private promise of indemnity to that amount. This transaction concluded, the king formally declared Marguerite de Lorraine sister of the queen, a daughter of France, and entitled to the dowry of 300,000 gold crowns, or 90,000*l.* sterling, usually given as the marriage portion of a French princess.

On Monday, the 18th day of September, the betrothal of the pair was performed at the Louvre in the apartment of queen Louise. A sumptuous banquet celebrated this event, served in such pompous state as to surpass all others previously seen in France. The remainder of the week passed in fêtes of the most gorgeous description, succeeded by midnight revels. The marriage of the illustrious pair was fixed for the 24th day of September. On the evening preceding that day, the duc de Joyeuse and the king retired to confer privately, his majesty giving strict commands that no personage should be admitted to his presence, and expressly excepted by name his first-chamberlain, the duc de Retz. It so happened, however, that the duke presented himself, and was about to pass into the royal presence, as his office and rank privileged him to do, when he was arrested by the usher in waiting, who informed him that the king and M. de Joyeuse were together and would see no person. The duke drew back; but, after considering for a few minutes, he offered

the usher 2000 crowns if he would suffer him to pass quietly. The temptation was too great: the duke entered the royal cabinet and walked up to the table before which the king and Joyeuse were seated, discussing their array for the morrow. "Sire!" exclaimed de Retz, ironically, anticipating the angry words which hovered on the royal lips, "pardon my intrusion. I am here to request a favour from your majesty. You have yet bestowed nothing on M. le duc de Joyeuse, the most accomplished and worthy gentleman of your court! Allow me, therefore, to make him a present of my office in your majesty's household—that of first-gentleman of the chamber!" So saying, the duc de Retz, the once faithful servant of Catherine and Henry's early instructor, making a profound reverence to the king, quitted the apartment. During the days succeeding his betrothal, therefore, the duc de Joyeuse received the appointment of governor of Normandy, and that of first-chamberlain.* The king also, on the same evening that he conferred this last appointment, presented his favourite with the estate and mansion of Limoux, which his majesty purchased for the purpose from madame de Bouillon.

The marriage-ceremony between Joyeuse and Marguerite de Lorraine was celebrated in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The habiliments of the king and the bridegroom were similar, each suit being valued at the sum of 10,000 crowns. The bride appeared wearing the state jewels and diadem of the queen her sister, and was led to the altar by Henry. The feasts and banquets which ensued cost the king the sum of 1,200,000 crowns.[1] For seventeen subsequent days the wedding revelries were kept up in the capital, each great noble offering a banquet to the royal family and

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Béthune. De Thou. L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III. Brantôme.

to the bride and bridegroom. The most superb of these banquets was that given by the cardinal de Bourbon, in his abbey of St. Germain des Prez. The city was illuminated, and the royal party passed down the river in barges. A grand joust was then given by the king in the gardens of the Louvre by torchlight. The following days there were games, equestrian feats, joustings with swords, running at the ring, quoits, and tennis, the festivities concluding by a second illumination of the capital. The guests at all the entertainments, which the king and the duc and duchesse de Joyeuse honoured with their presence, were interdicted from appearing in the same attire; the jewels of the ladies even were to be worn in novel devices. The profusion displayed by the king caused the most indignant murmurs throughout the land. "His majesty, nevertheless, esteemed himself more fortunate than Alexander the Great by his acquisition of two such friends as Joyeuse and la Valette; and, in truth, the amenity of mind and manner shown by the duc de Joyeuse, and the refinement of his wit, cause him greatly to shine," writes the imperial ambassador.

Having so successfully accomplished the aggrandizement of M. de Joyeuse, the king, during the following months of October and November, 1581, commenced to devise measures for the elevation of la Valette. This young nobleman was the second son of Jean de Nogaret, marquis de' la Valette. He was handsome, brave, arrogant, profuse, and an adept in that *piquante* scandal which afforded Henry delight. La Valette, consequently, was a greater favourite with the king than his more refined and intellectual rival Joyeuse. The first step taken by the king was to purchase from Strozzi, for the sum of 50,000 crowns, and an annual pension of 20,000 livres, his office of colonel-general of infantry, the which was immediately be-

stowed on la Valette. The king next despatched an envoy into Béarn to purchase the county of Epernon from the king of Navarre; and when the transfer of this appanage to the crown was completed, his majesty issued letters-patent creating his favourite Jean Louis Nogaret de la Valette duc d'Epernon, with precedence above all other peers, excepting those of royal or of sovereign descent, and the duc de Joyeuse. On the same day the king conferred the title of duc de Piney on François de Luxembourg, comte de Brienne, whose imperial descent made the lineage of the favourite seem very insignificant when both were pompously recited before the assembled Chambers. Henry's next proceeding was to annul the engagement subsisting between the new duc d'Epernon and Jeanne, heiress of the marquis de Mouy.[1] He then despatched an embassage to the duc de Lorraine, to ask the hand of madame Christine, youngest sister of queen Louise, for Epernon. The demand was of course granted; and the young princess, who was not then of marriageable age, was betrothed to the duke. She was declared a daughter of France, her dowry of 300,000 gold crowns being immediately delivered to the duc d'Epernon.

This alliance, however, was never accomplished; nevertheless, restitution of Christine's enormous dowry was not exacted from the duc d'Epernon. He espoused subsequently the granddaughter of the constable Anne de Montmorency, Marguerite de Foix, heiress of the comte de Candale, Captal de Buch. This illustrious alliance was effected by the king despite the opposition

[1] To indemnify this lady, who was also an heiress and daughter of Claude Louis de Vaudray, marquis de Mouy, the king caused her to be affianced to George de Joyeuse, younger brother of his favourite. The former dying, in consequence of exposure to the cold during one of Henry's penitential processions, the young heiress espoused Henri de Lorraine, count de Chaligny.

of the duc de Montmorency, uncle of the bride. Henry meanwhile received protest after protest from his nobles against the precedence granted to the favourites Joyeuse and Epernon. The duc de Montmorency declared that he never would recognise, nor appear in any assembly, public or private, at which the favourites might be present; and commented with indignation on the fact that a cadet of the house la Valette should be entitled to precede the noblest princes of the realm, such as Montmorency, Luxembourg, Tremouille, and Bouillon; and yield the *pas* only to the princes of the blood and to the ducs de Guise, Nevers, and Nemours, peers of foreign royal extraction.[1] All kinds of satirical libels were launched, in which "le Nogaret," as the duc d'Epernon was contemptuously termed, was compared to Gaveston, favourite of Edward II. king of England; and the parallel ended by predicting for him the same wretched fate. The king concluded this episode of folly by presenting Epernon with the sum of 400,000 francs to purchase suitable equipments, dress, and furniture for his new rank. When the chancellor Cheverny remonstrated upon this lavish expenditure, Henry, after commenting on the valour of Joyeuse—who, his majesty said, had lost seven teeth at the siege of La Fère—replied, "Ah! I shall become wise and thrifty now that I have married my sons!"[2]

The lavish gifts made by Henry to his favourites

[1] Of the reigning houses of Lorraine, Mantua, and Savoy.

[2] "Enfin," says Cheverny, "le roy se mit à aymer deux favoris qui le possédèrent si fort qu'il ne faisoit que ce qu'il leur plaisoit; le mettant mal avec la reyne sa mère et la reyne sa femme, en guerre avec son frère, firent chasser la reyne de Navarre sa sœur, éloignant les vieux serviteurs, et donnerent des dégoûts aux princes. Ils donnaient les charges à leurs créatures, epuiserent les finances et furent cause de mauvais édits et de maux inouis."—Caractère de Henry III., par le Chancélier de Cheverny: Bibl. Imp. MS. Dupuy, fol. 168.

did not render him more frugal in his private expenditure. While the people in many districts of France were clamouring for bread, the Louvre swarmed with apes, dogs, and parrots. At his various palaces Henry had now 2,000 lap-dogs. These dogs were divided into bands of six, each half-dozen having a keeper, who yearly received from his majesty a stipend of 200 crowns, exclusive of the food consumed by the animals under his charge. In each palace an apartment, adjacent to the royal bed-chamber, was appropriated to the dogs, and fitted with cushions and baskets lined with green velvet for the repose of the king's diminutive pets. Sometimes Henry would take a sudden disgust and give away his lap-dogs, and then buy them back again at extravagant prices. Usually, however, the present of a dog from his majesty to one of his nobles was indicative of a high degree of personal favour. When the Venetian ambassador Lippomano had his audience of farewell, Henry, as a crowning gift and mark of favour, took from his doublet a diminutive white dog of Turkish breed, and, after kissing the little animal repeatedly, gave it to the ambassador to keep for love of him. Another foible which the king at this period pursued with an eagerness perfectly incredible, was to collect illuminated letters and monograms, also coloured effigies of saints and of the Madonna. Often the ladies of the court propitiated his majesty by the presentation of a packet of these treasures, very greatly to the destruction of their Missals and Hours. When he had amassed a sufficient quantity of these paintings, the king gravely proceeded, with a few favoured attendants, to one or other of the many oratories or chapels he had established in the churches of Paris, and amused himself by pasting them on the walls of the edifice.

Catherine de Medici deeply mourned these incorrigible follies, and resented the elevation of Joyeuse and

Epernon. From this period commence those bitter misunderstandings between Henry and his mother, which at intervals cast the unfortunate king on his own limited resources. Catherine indignantly deprecated the influence of the new favourites; the abandoned lives and inferior birth of sycophants such as Quélus, St. Luc, d'O, and St. Mégrin, had restrained them from competing in politics with the queen-mother. The viziers in the ascendant, however—patricians of lofty descent and men more than ordinarily gifted, whose favour commenced when years of voluptuous excess had destroyed the little vigour which Henry once might have possessed—soon assumed an authoritative attitude in affairs of state.

During these transactions the duc d'Anjou marched to Château Thierry at the head of a magnificent body of troops, half of which, nevertheless, in contravention of every treaty with Spain, were in the pay of Henry III. The first in command under the duke was the baron de Fervaques. The force consisted of 10,000 infantry and a body of cavalry 4,000 strong. In the duke's army were the duc d'Elbœuf, M. de St. Luc, the comtes de Laval, Saint Aignan, Montgommery, and Silly; the vicomtes de Turenne, de la Guierche, de la Châtre, and Bellegarde. The first military operation was the relief of Cambray, which under de Balagny had stood an heroic siege of nearly eighteen months. The army crossed the frontier, harassed by a body of Walloon soldiers sent to oppose its passage. The Spanish viceroy, Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma,[1] lay encamped before the city, and on the 17th of August, 1581, the two armies confronted each other. A disastrous accident then occurred, which depressed

[1] Don Juan of Austria died October 1, 1578; he was succeeded by Alexandro Farnese, prince of Parma, in his viceregal functions in the Low Countries.

the ardour of Monsieur.* The son of the duc de Ventadour and Turenne—young cavaliers inspired with martial ardour, and burning to distinguish themselves —made an assault at the head of a small body of troops on a Spanish foraging detachment, and tried to intercept its return to the camp. The conflict ended by the French being overpowered and by the capture of Turenne. The following morning Farnese suddenly raised the siege of Cambray, and retired to Valenciennes, taking with him his illustrious prisoner, and the duc d'Anjou made his pacific entry into the town.

The following days the duke captured the citadels of Arleux and Ecluse, and then invested Cateau Cambrésis, which soon surrendered. The duke after this triumphant opening of the campaign, leaving strong garrisons in Cambray and the places he had captured, departed to visit Elizabeth queen of England, to ask her co-operation in and consent to his enterprise, and to notify to her his election as duc de Brabant.

CHAPTER IV.

1582—1583.

Second visit of the duc d'Anjou to England—Queen Elizabeth affiances herself to the duke—Retracts her promise—Departure of the duke for Antwerp—His splendid suite of English and French cavaliers—He is invested with the ducal diadem of the Low Countries—Pilgrimages made by Henry III.—Return of the queen of Navarre to court—Secret negotiations of the League—Correspondence of the duc de Guise with Spain—His colloquies with the Spanish ambassador—Conspiracy of Salzedo—The king institutes a new religious order—His public appearance in the streets of Paris in the garb of a penitent—Disgust of the Parisians—Licence of the clergy—Their inflammatory addresses—Position of the duc d'Anjou in the Low Countries—His repulse from Antwerp—Retires to Château Thierry—His failing health—The queen of Navarre and the marquis de Chanvallon—Her scandalous treatment by king Henry—Arrest of the queen of Navarre and her ladies—Her departure for Châtelleraud—Ambassage of MM. d'Aubigny and Duplessis Mornay—Details—Marguerite corresponds with Philip II.—She retires to Nérac.

The duc d'Anjou was received by queen Elizabeth with magnificence and honour. Not only did Elizabeth renew all her former promises and exchange rings with the duke, but she declared her approbation of the election of the States, and promised him efficient aids of men and money to drive Farnese and the Spaniards from Flanders. The articles of the marriage contract were again revised[1] and formally presented to the council; while Monsieur assumed the privileges and prerogatives appertaining to the betrothed husband of

[1] The marriage articles between the duc d'Anjou and Elizabeth, queen of England, were drawn June 11th, 1581.

the queen. A violent faction in the court and council chamber, however, vehemently opposed the nuptials of Elizabeth. The marriage was hateful to Leicester, Hatton, and Walsingham—the latter being well able to appreciate the instability of the duke's character from his long residence in France; also it was opposed by the ladies of Elizabeth's household, and by the nation at large. Abroad Elizabeth was told that the completion of the marriage would complicate rather than promote her interests. It might confirm the deadly enmity of Philip II., while France probably would be less solicitous to propitiate her favour. Moreover, the condition of the unfortunate captive of Bolton, Mary Stuart, must of necessity be ameliorated, did her brother-in-law the duc d'Anjou ascend the English throne—a concession prejudicial, as the queen believed, to the peace of her realm and the designs of the council respecting Scotland. The alliance also would have entailed upon the English nation the sole burden and responsibility of the war in the Low Countries; for Elizabeth and her council, aware how reluctantly Henry III. had consented to the enterprises of his brother, were far too well acquainted with the character of the king to doubt but that, on the first opportunity, he would reconcile himself with Philip II., and decline longer to furnish Monsieur either with troops or subsidies.

On the other hand, the queen perceived dangers as imminent, should her final rejection of his suit convert Monsieur from her devoted adorer to her bitter foe. Philip, it was surmised, had more than once revolved the project of conciliating his turbulent provinces of the Low Countries, and of procuring at least the recognition of the supremacy of Spain by bestowing that sovereignty, with the hand of a Spanish infanta, on a prince of his own selection. Elizabeth, therefore,

dreaded beyond measure lest the duc d'Anjou should ask and obtain the hand of his niece Doña Isabel, Philip's eldest daughter, and thus insure the eventual confirmation of his title of duc de Brabant, under the suzerainty of the Spanish crown, and the cordial reconciliation of Spain and France. This project, the queen knew, would be highly acceptable to Henry III. as tending to the aggrandizement of the heir-presumptive of France, and the overthrow of Guise and the faction of the Leaguers. Nevertheless, the opposition which was everywhere demonstrated against the alliance—the tears of her ladies, the reproaches of Leicester, the advice of her physicians, and her own misgivings—at length so wrought upon Elizabeth as to induce her to demand back the ring of betrothal she had given the duke and to return his own. A violent scene ensued; the duke had recourse to threats and supplications. He inveighed against the inconstancy of the queen, deplored her servitude to her ministers, and vowed that he would quit England and enter into negotiation with the king of Spain. This last threat proved effectual. Elizabeth, suddenly pretending to be touched by the duke's distress, wept their menaced separation. She prayed Monsieur not to leave her disconsolate and abandoned to the mercy of designing courtiers; and so successfully did she cajole the duke that he spent a month in cheering Elizabeth's dejection, and left London again possessed of the queen's promise to marry him after his inauguration as duc de Brabant.[1]

The duke took his leave of Elizabeth at Canterbury on the 7th day of February. The queen commanded Howard, lord admiral, the earl of Leicester, and a train of a hundred nobles and gentlemen, to attend the duke

[1] Mém. de M. le duc de Nevers, p. 475, 569, tome i. Addit. aux Mém. de Castelnau, le Laboureur, tome i. p. 687. Louis Guyon: Nouveaux Mém. d'Histoire par l'Abbé d'Artigny, tome v.

to Antwerp and witness the ceremony of his investiture, as a mark of her satisfaction at the election of the States. She furnished him, moreover, with three frigates fully equipped, and presented him with a large sum of money. The duc d'Anjou landed at Flushing, where he was received by the princes of Orange and Epinoy, attended by a great suite. Orange threw himself at the feet of Monsieur, and hailed him as Liberator of the Netherlands! Monsieur then proceeded to Middelbourg. As he approached the town, the members of the States of Holland, marching two and two, appeared for the purpose of presenting the duke with an address of congratulation. They complimented him on his auspicious arrival, on the peace which he had recently negotiated in France, and thanked him rapturously for his great achievement in relieving Cambray, and for the journey he had taken the trouble to make into England—all which events, it was said, greatly redounded to the glory of the Low Countries. Monsieur then continued his progress to Lille, and from thence to Antwerp. The ceremony of his investiture with the ducal diadem of the revolted provinces was there performed. The prince of Orange, after receiving the oath of the prince to preserve inviolate the conventions previously agreed upon, and especially to respect the independence of Antwerp and other towns stipulated, placed the ducal robe round his neck, saying, "Monseigneur, behold the mantle of our duke! Clasp it so well that it may never fall from your shoulders!" He then put the diadem on the duke's head, and proclaimed him duc d'Anjou and de Brabant, and count of Flanders and Holland. The duc de Brabant, next made his solemn entry into the city of Antwerp, attended by his magnificent train of English and French noblemen. He was preceded by the nobles of Brabant, led by the chancellor of the province and by prince Lamoral

Egmont. The governor of Antwerp rode immediately before the duke bare-headed, and carrying the ducal sceptre and hand of justice. The procession was terminated by the singular spectacle of a band of 300 convicts, bound together in file, and having halters round their necks, who incessantly implored the duke's mercy. At a given spot the procession halted, and the criminals were brought into the presence of the duke, who formally pardoned them all, amidst the firing of cannon and vociferous shouts of "*Vive le duc de Brabant!*"[1]

During the triumphant installation of the duc d'Anjou, king Henry was engaged in making a penitential excursion of unusual severity—one which general opinion pronounced to be well-timed, when the king, after spending the sum of 900,000 gold crowns on his favourites since his accession, had now apparently reached the climax of folly by bestowing the bâton, at liberty by the decease of the maréchal de Cossé Brissac, on the duc de Joyeuse. Henry and his queen quitted Paris together on the evening of Friday, January 26th, to make a pilgrimage on foot to Notre Dame de Châtres, at whose shrine their majesties offered a Notre Dame of silver gilt, and performed a *neuvaine*, that the blessing of offspring might be granted them. From Châtres the royal pilgrims proceeded to Notre Dame de Liesse to make the same petition, and from thence they journeyed to Lyons. In order to propitiate Catherine, Henry had appointed her regent during his excursion, which was to last two months. The firm and politic spirit of the queen showed itself, brief as was the interval during which she reigned, unfettered by the cabals and partialities of the favourites. The duc d'Anjou during this absence of the king sent to borrow 60,000 crowns, as he said the pecuniary levies

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxv. Mathieu: Hist. du Regne de Henri III., liv. vii. Hume.

of the States were not yet forthcoming. Catherine replied by advancing the sum from her private revenues. She, however, sent her son word "that it would be the last supply conceded, unless he could prevail upon the States to acknowledge the king of France for their sovereign in case of his own demise." The queen sent her son, in addition, a succour of 4,000 Swiss, and a body of Gascon horse. Catherine next wrote to welcome back her daughter Marguerite to court, and entered into a correspondence with the king of Navarre to induce him to visit Paris. Marguerite had long been thoroughly wearied of the monotony of the court at Nérac. She had fallen into extreme dissension with the king her husband, whose profligate life excited her jealousy and disgust. She had quarrelled with Pibrac, the chancellor of her counties of Agen and Quercy; and had made a vow never to set foot again within the principality of Béarn in consequence of a feud which there happened relative to her Romish chapel, until the orthodox faith was re-established. Moreover, her own levity of conduct with Harlay de Chanvallon, a gentleman in the suite of the duc d'Anjou when the latter was the guest of the king of Navarre at Nérac, had created such scandal, however cunningly Marguerite veils the facts in her *Memoirs*, as to render it advisable that she should retire for a time from the dominions of her husband. The king, when he was first informed of his sister's desire to visit the court, feigned, on purpose to torment Marguerite, to withhold his consent, though in reality Henry rejoiced in the opportunity thus afforded of again closely scrutinizing his sister's actions. For many reasons Catherine deemed her daughter's visit expedient; she therefore now wrote decisively to desire Marguerite to set out, and herself repaired to Fontainebleau to meet her.

During her residence at Nérac Marguerite kept up

close relations with the court. Her chief correspondent was Françoise de Clermont, duchesse d'Usez, upon whom the queen lavished the most affectionate epithets, and whom she terms "*ma sibille.*" By the command of the queen-mother, the cardinal de Bourbon, the dowager-princesse de Condé, and the duchesse d'Usez, proceeded to the frontier of Guyenne to receive the queen. From Fontainebleau Catherine and her daughter journeyed to Paris. Marguerite seems to have been satisfied with her reception, and she writes to the king of Navarre to exhort him to imitate her example and repair to court. She says that the king of Navarre and herself were deemed inimical by "les ducs," as Marguerite always calls Joyeuse and Epernon. In the second letter written by Marguerite to her husband after her return to Paris, she gives a depreciating picture of the Guises, representing the duke as having greatly fallen in public esteem. "As for M. de Guise, he has grown very thin and aged, while M. de Mayenne has become so fat as to be absolutely deformed thereby. The two are little followed now, although they are always giving parties for tennis, ball, pall-mall, and other diversions, but all who go there twice together are sure to meet with a sharp reprimand, as the dukes are jealous," writes Marguerite.[1] In the same epistle she also gives her husband the news that her brother the duc d'Anjou had recently sent a messenger to queen Elizabeth, to assure her majesty that he meant faithfully to keep his word and return to London in a month to espouse her; "at which happy intelligence," said Marguerite, "the queen [of England] commanded a great display of fire-works."

The sagacity of the queen-mother had lately detected the existence of the most astonishing correspondence between her son-in-law the king of Navarre, the duc

[1] Marguerite de Valois au Roy de Navarre, MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, tome ccxvii. p. 19. Guessard: Lettres de Marguerite de Valois.

de Guise, and the king of Spain—hence, therefore, arose Marguerite's *empressement* towards her husband. The object of this correspondence was to induce Henri of Navarre and his Huguenots to join the League, which was nominally arrayed to procure the final overthrow of the principles of reform. The bravery and ability shown by the king of Navarre during the recent war, and especially his gallant capture of Cahors, had been observed with admiration by Philip II. and by the princes of Lorraine. On the conclusion of the conferences of Fleix, therefore, the duc de Mayenne cautiously broached the subject to the baron de Salignac, by whom the matter was communicated to the king of Navarre. This was followed by an autograph communication from the king of Spain. Philip proposed that the king of Navarre should enter into the League, and offered, on that condition, to aid him with a Spanish army to possess himself of the principal strongholds of Guyenne. His Catholic majesty made comment on the feeble health of the duc d'Anjou, and on the position of the king of Navarre in relation to the throne in the event of Monsieur's demise, when the greatest efforts would be made to exclude him from the succession on account of his faith. For these reasons Philip exhorted the king of Navarre to become a leader in the dominant faction, and offered, in case he were willing to repudiate his consort Marguerite de Valois, to bestow upon him the hand of one of his own daughters. This communication took the king of Navarre completely by surprise. Its artful plea, on reflection, inspired him with indignation; for what could the object of the League be but treason against the person of the reigning sovereign and his dynasty, if the motive of religion were thus discarded? Henri perceived the subtle aim of the house of Lorraine, and that its princes were not more likely to respect his collateral right to the crown, when they showed such dis-

regard for the direct claims of their anointed and orthodox monarch. From this period, therefore, Henri, convinced that the true aim of the ultra-Catholic party, headed by the princes of Guise, was to change the dynasty on the decease of king Henry and his brother —princes likely to die without legitimate heirs—felt that his own interests prompted a cordial reconciliation with the king, and a support as energetic as he could afford to the royal authority, already so fallen in public esteem. At this season it must be owned that the conduct of the king of Navarre had not been likely to impress the world with the opinion that he adhered to the reformed ritual for other than political motives; the deduction, therefore, might fairly be hazarded by Philip II. that propositions more conducive to his interests would lure him to the defence of the so-called orthodox faith. His life was spent in the indulgence of habitual immorality; and the political position of the reformed party, rather than the advance of its members in piety and godliness of life, as had been the aim of queen Jeanne, seemed to be the sole advantage regarded by Henri d'Albret. The demeanour of Henri, when attending the public *prêches* of his ministers, at this period of his life afforded no edifying example. The Venetian ambassador relates, that it was generally believed that the king of Navarre had no religion, and that he held the reformed ministers in the greatest contempt.[1] "One day," continues he, "while one of these said individuals was preaching, the king of Navarre diverted himself by eating cherries and throwing the stones into the minister's face; one stone hit the latter in the eye, causing great damage to that member."[2]

[1] "E opinione che egli non creda in cosa alcuna, perche si dice che alli suoi predicatori ugonotti medesimi quando sono nel pergamo fa mille scherni."—Viaggio del Signor Girolamo Lippomano, Ambasciatore in Francia nel anno 1577.

[2] Ibid.

The life of the prince de Condé, on the other hand, exemplified in greater degree the rigid and self-denying religion of the deceased queen of Navarre. Condé practised the same asceticisms; and published manifestoes redolent with stern denunciations against vice and dissipation, worthy to have issued from the pen of queen Jeanne and her ministers. Though Condé did not possess the popularity of *le bon et joyeux Henri*, his judgment and consistency of conduct procured him greater deference. Unfortunately the prince, being reserved and desponding in temper, could not be persuaded to quit his cheerless abode at St. Jean d'Angely. The little progress made by the reformed party, the massacre at Paris, the mysterious decease of queen Jeanne d'Albret, and of his beautiful wife, Marie de Clèves, seem to have been the subjects of Condé's melancholy broodings. As for his former comrade in arms, Henri de Navarre, the prince alluded to him always as one lost in depravity and worldly lusts; and persisted in his refusals to visit the court of Nérac.

On the arrival of the queen of Navarre in Paris, Catherine seems to have communicated to her daughter the proposals made by the king of Spain to her husband. Soon after the queen-mother received a detail from the hand of Henri de Navarre, which appears to have been the first positive intimation possessed by the government relative to the secret machinations and ultimate designs of the League. From thenceforth the duc de Guise no longer holds so prominent a share of Marguerite's favour; she could not pardon the project of her own divorce, as proposed by Philip, which he had appeared to sanction. Besides, another *liaison* now occupied the mind of Marguerite—one with her brother's chamberlain Jacques de Harlay, marquis de Chanvallon. Marguerite, therefore, heartily co-operated with her

mother in denouncing the perfidy of Philip's subtle design, aiding the queen in proving its impossibility of accomplishment, had the king of Navarre been rash enough to agree to such proposals; and earnestly exhorting the king to visit the court of France, an event which Catherine now greatly desired. "Monsieur," writes the queen of Navarre to her husband, after the return of Henry III. to the Louvre, "yesterday I infinitely wished to have seen you here. We had music which lasted all night, the windows of the palace were opened for every one to hear, and the king danced in his own saloon. We are to have balls and assemblies twice in the week, and if you would take my counsel I advise you to leave your agriculture, and your misanthropic humours, in which you resemble Timon, and come here to enjoy yourself, and live again in the world."[1] She again wrote, "Believe, Monsieur, that M. de Guise can do you no harm; and as for the king, I will stake my life that you will receive no damage from him. Come, then; you will in a week gain more adherents here, than you will passing all your days in Gascony!"[2] The king of Navarre, nevertheless, was inexorable; he knew Henry, and that it was too often the practice of that monarch to avenge the political annoyances given, even after the individual suspected had tendered palpable proofs of fidelity.

The failure of this project to renew the civil war in France only rendered the Spanish cabinet more resolved to accomplish its purpose. Philip deeply resented the usurpation by Monsieur of the sovereignty of Brabant; while he felt persuaded that peace would never be re-established in the Low Countries whilst France

[1] Lettre de Marguerite de Valois au Roy de Navarre. MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, tome ccxvii. fol. 13. Guessard: Lettres de la Reyne de Navarre.

[2] Ibid.

remained tranquil. Accordingly, the king of Spain recommenced an active correspondence with the duc de Guise. He challenged him to rise in defence of the faith menaced in France, and more especially in Flanders; and even added threats, if he refused to make the diversion needful to secure the pre-eminence of the Spanish arms in the Netherlands, to divulge to the French cabinet certain important minutes of the conference holden at Joinville, and which had been found amongst the papers of don Juan of Austria.[1] The duc d'Anjou, nevertheless, was a formidable obstacle to the designs of the princes of Lorraine, willing as they were to co-operate with the king of Spain, and aid him in checking the advance of heresy. As long as Monsieur lived, no pretext existed for assailing the lawfulness of his future accession to the crown, therefore no excuse could be pleaded for rebellion. The death of the duke once compassed, a formidable rival was removed from the path of the king of Spain; and the taking up of arms in France became legitimate in the eyes of a certain party, to oppose the succession of the heretic Henri de Navarre, and, the consequent overthrow of the faith. From these considerations and motives arose the extensive development of a conspiracy, which de Thou characterizes as one the most important and terrible then on record, and of which M. de Salzedo was the first agent and victim.

Nicolas de Salzedo was a gentleman of Spanish origin, and the son of Pierre de Salzedo, whose contests with the cardinal de Lorraine, seventeen years previously, had been the cause of a severe local conflict in Lorraine, called La Guerre Cardinale. The death of the elder Salzedo at the massacre of Paris had consequently been the penalty for his rash defiance of a prince of the house of Lorraine. His son Nicholas,

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxv. p. 622, tome viii.

meantime, embarked in all kinds of dissipations and gambling; and the result was that, reduced by his profligacy to miserable penury, Salzedo sought to retrieve his fortunes by forging bills of exchange and by coining money. His crime was detected, and Salzedo was condemned to the terrible punishment inflicted in those days on coiners, that of being thrown alive into a caldron of boiling oil.[1] The noble birth of Nicholas de Salzedo, however, induced the duc de Lorraine to interfere, and petition the king for a remission of the culprit's sentence. The prayer was granted, and Salzedo, thus delivered from a cruel death, swore devoted loyalty to the interests of the house of Lorraine. A family tie, moreover, now subsisted between Salzedo and his new patrons; the consort of the duc de Mercœur, Marie de Luxembourg, was the niece of Salzedo's mother;[2] he, therefore, entered heart and soul into the projects of the Guises, and was judged by them to be a fitting instrument for the promotion of the designs they meditated. Accordingly the duc de Guise wrote at this period to the duc de Lorraine to send Salzedo to Paris. The latter at once presented himself at the hôtel Guise, and seems there to have been initiated into many of the counsels of the League. Though guilty of the most odious crimes, Salzedo was a fanatic in religion. The duke drew so irritating a picture of the approaching ruin of the orthodox faith, through the follies of the king and the despicable frivolity of the duc d'Anjou, as to kindle the savage zeal of Salzedo. "Do you not perceive that through the horrid misgovernment of the realm, misery is daily on the increase? To arrest its

[1] Lettre de Busbec, liv. viii.: à l'Empereur Rodolphe II.

[2] Marie de Baucaire Peguillon, a favourite maid of honour in the service of Mary Stuart, when queen of France, married Sebastian de Luxembourg, seigneur de Martigues; her sister Françoise espoused Pierre de Salzedo, a Spaniard of the lineage of Figueroa condé de Feria.

accursed progress would be an easy task, were M. d'Anjou out of the way. The life of this prince will remain an invincible obstacle to our endeavours. The success of Monsieur in Brabant is owing to the defeat of the Catholic arms!" Several interviews subsequently took place between the ducs de Guise and Mayenne and M. de Salzedo, at which, according to the latter, Villeroy was also present. He was shown the list of nobles, confederates of the League; also a statement of their funds and resources. It was in the first place agreed that Salzedo should offer his services to the duc d'Anjou, and propose to raise, at his own cost, a regiment of volunteer troops, the expense of which, in reality, was to be defrayed by the princes of Lorraine. It was believed that Monsieur, whose army was thinned by desertion, would eagerly accept the offer, and reserve this regiment of his countrymen for his own body-guard, or to garrison Dunkirk, either of these plans equally serving the designs of the League. After some short interval Salzedo departed, taking with him papers containing important information concerning the military position of the realm of France, which he was to deliver to Farnese in person. This mission Salzedo accomplished, making a sojourn of two days in the camp of the viceroy. He then proceeded to Bruges and obtained an audience of the duc d'Anjou, who accepted his services, and received him with distinction, believing Salzedo to be still the mortal enemy of the house of Guise on account of the assassination of his father.

The arrival of Salzedo, his seeming devotion to Monsieur, and the liberality of his proposition, nevertheless, aroused the suspicion of the prince of Orange. The latter, therefore, caused careful inquiries to be made relative to his antecedent history. The prince thus discovered his reconciliation with the house of Guise,

and his suspicious visit to the camp of the viceroy. Further scrutiny brought the prince additional information of the secret intelligence between Farnese and his visitor—their conference respecting the plot to kill the duc d'Anjou, and their mutual understanding. The prince of Orange imparted this information to the duc d'Anjou, who, fortunately heeding the counsel of the prince, resolved first to arrest Salzedo, and then to investigate the accusation. The same evening, therefore, Salzedo was arrested in the ante-room of Monsieur's apartment, as he was proceeding to pay his devoirs to the duke.[1]

His life being thus in peril, Salzedo, cowardly as well as treacherous, unhesitatingly determined to reveal all he knew relative to the conspiracy. His confession paralyzed the duke with consternation. After relating the promises made by the duc de Guise to reward his fidelity, Salzedo, continuing his detail, said: "The duke sent for me by night. I found him in company with a gentleman formerly in the suite of don John, and nephew to the Spanish ambassador. They asked me how many ships there were off the coast of Normandy, and the duke commanded me to put it in writing—which I did, with the number of the crews of the said vessels, which minute he sent by the Spanish gentleman to the prince of Parma. I was then commanded to retire to Paris, where I remained for ten or twelve days."[2] Salzedo then stated that he was sent to carry letters into Lorraine from the duc de Guise to Bassompierre, Rosny, and to the comte de Charny; and from thence he retired into Champagne until the return of the duc de Mayenne from the south, when he was again summoned to Paris. On his arrival Salzedo was conducted to the

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxv. Pierre Mathieu Hist. de France, tome i.

[2] Déposition de Salcedo signée de sa main. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, vol. lxxxvii. MS.

hôtel de Guise, where he found Mayenne and Villeroy, when the latter exhorted him faithfully to serve the duc de Guise and the king of Spain. That whilst Villeroy was talking to him, the dukes walked together up and down the apartment engaged in earnest conference, and receiving from time to time papers from the hand of Villeroy. The latter then told him "that the duc d'Aumale held possession of Picardy; that Guise and Mayenne were masters of Champagne and Bourgogne; and that the nobles of these provinces had pledged themselves, in the presence of the comte de Charny, to adhere to the League. That Jean de Mouy held the Pays de Caux; and Matignon, Granville and Cherbourg. All the ports of Brétagne were, moreover, in the hands of adherents, and amongst other places Brest—all which fortresses would prevent the landing of M. le Duc. He then proceeded to inform me," continued Salzedo, "that Lyons was open for the passage of a papal and Savoyard army under the command of M. de Nemours, and that the Spanish forces were about to invade France, passing through the principality of Béarn." The ducs de Guise and Mayenne, having once more exhorted Salzedo to be faithful and expeditious, placed a roll of documents in his hands consisting of a letter to Farnese, in which Guise apologized for his tardy measures, and promised future alacrity. There was also a document sent to be forwarded to Spain, explanatory of the resources, numbers, and prospects of the Leaguers. A message was further confided to Salzedo to the effect "that he was to admonish the duke of Parma not to advance suddenly to surprise Calais or Dunkirk, else that his Christian majesty would find himself compelled to march to the aid of his brother. As for my own participation in the plot," continued Salzedo, "it was limited to asking the permission of the duc d'Anjou to raise a regiment, which I was to promise for immediate ser-

vice. I was then to obtain the command at Dunkirk, as, said they, it was expedient to have a port in that direction. My demand was thought likely to be conceded, if the viceroy Farnese pretended to menace the town; as Monsieur, having a whole regiment ready for service, was sure to send it to garrison Dunkirk."[1] Salzedo, moreover, confessed that he had read the following names in the roll of the Leaguers shown to him by the duc de Guise:—The maréchal d'Aumont, the ducs de Nevers and d'Elbœuf, the governors of Lyons, Calais, Havre, Caux, Bretagne, and Dieppe, the lords de Puygaillard, Villequier, de la Châtre, Balsac Entragues, Lansac, d'O, Maugiron, and Philibert de la Guiche. He also avowed that the princes of Lorraine declared that the king's favourites Joyeuse and Epernon were cognizant of the plot, and, as good sons of the church, had not presumed to counteract projects undertaken for the resuscitation of the orthodox faith. In Paris the conspirators held intelligence with the father of Villeroy, and with a wealthy burgess of the name of Hothman.

Such was the confession of the sieur de Salzedo. Scarcely was there a noble family but had one of its members implicated in the conspiracy. Its alleged aim was to remove the duc d'Anjou by assassination, and thus to deprive the States of Flanders of the duke whom they had elected. As sovereign of the Low Countries and the future husband of the queen of England, a third formidable obstacle would have risen in the person of Monsieur against the almost universal ascendency of the Catholic king. The power of Elizabeth of England, if permitted to become consolidated by her alliance with a prince of Valois, probably might then have defied his intrigues—insomuch as an attack upon the realm of England must have involved a contest with France,

[1] Déposition de M. de Salcedo signée de sa main.

and already the design of the Spanish armada agitated Philip's mind. Thus far was the universal sovereignty of Philip II. to be promoted by the operations of the League. But yet another triumph to be achieved thereby had dawned upon the prolific brain of the king of Spain. This was the elevation of the infanta Isabel—the daughter of Philip and Elisabeth de Valois, eldest sister of Henry III.—to her uncle's throne. On the death of the duc d'Anjou the succession would lapse to the house of Vendôme, of which the heretic Henri de Navarre was chief. To prevent the accession of a heretic dynasty to the throne of St. Louis was a cause, Philip thought, potent enough to justify a civil contest. The crown of France, rescued from such pollution, must, as a necessary consequence, be transferred to the house of Lorraine, the legitimate representatives of Charlemagne, and a younger branch of Hapsbourg. This was the lure which bound the house of Guise to Philip's policy. Henry III., the weak, degraded monarch, swept from the throne he was unable to defend, Guise, proclaimed king by alleged priority of right over the descendants of Hugues Capet, and by the acclamations of the orthodox and the sanction of the Holy See, was to consolidate his dynasty by his own union with the infanta Isabel; or, if deemed more expedient, by the marriage of the princess with his eldest son, being then the acknowledged heir of France. In furtherance of these projects, the king of Spain had agreed to furnish the duc de Guise with the sum of 50,000 gold crowns a month.

The duc d'Anjou, on receiving the confession of Salzedo, despatched an express to Paris to inform king Henry of the formidable conspiracy. Filled with compunction, when too late, for his fickle and reprehensible conduct, Monsieur advertised the king of his own failing health, and implored him to rouse himself

from his habitual supine indulgence to combat a state of affairs which, in case of his demise, would leave his majesty a prey to the extortions of a disaffected nobility leagued against their sovereign and his heretic successor. Never before had the duc d'Anjou spoken so wisely, nor counselled so sagaciously.

The comte de Dammartin, the envoy of the duc d'Anjou, obtained immediate audience of Henry III. The vastness of the scheme, and the audacity of its details, rendered the king speechless with dismay and indignation. His majesty then sent for the queen-mother, and implored her aid in his emergency. After some private conference, Pomponne de Bellièvre was summoned to the presence of their majesties. The king, without previous comment, placed the confession made by Salzedo into the hands of Bellièvre, exclaiming, "See, read, M. de Bellièvre! Can you peruse that document without being transfixed with horror?" Bellièvre read and returned the paper, unable to utter a word. "Well, M. de Bellièvre," resumed the king, "it is my intention to send you and M. de Brulart this very day to my brother. Nevertheless, you are not to make a mystery of your journey to Villeroy, who, as you perceive, is compromised, though I do not doubt his fidelity. You will say to my brother that my disquietude is intense, and that I desire that the accused Salzedo, after being submitted to an interrogatory before you, should be conducted hither. If my brother consents to this, I shall believe that the confession of M. de Salzedo is genuine; if he refuses, I shall deem this accusation to be a fable invented by certain persons of his suite to cause dissensions between us, and to disturb my repose and comfort."[1] It is difficult to follow the course of the royal

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxv. Discours tragique et véritable de Nicholas Salcedo, sur l'empoisonnement par luy entreprints en la personne de

deductions, and to comprehend how, in his majesty's opinion, the fabrication of a plot to kill Monsieur and to dethrone himself, could have been invented to sow dissensions between the royal brothers; but the king throughout manifested the greatest disinclination to credit the details of the conspiracy. The fact was patent everywhere of the conferences holden between the Guises and the emissaries of Spain at Peronne and Joinville—to say nothing of the secret correspondence which passed between Philip and the deceased cardinal de Lorraine before the conference at Bayonne; and nominally, respecting the marriage of don Carlos with Mary Stuart after the decease of Francis II. The duc de Guise gloried in avowing himself the heir of the deceased cardinal's policy as well as the inheritor of his temporal possessions. The secretary of state, Villeroy, stoutly defends himself in his Memoirs from the charge made by Salzedo. He says: "I swear and protest in the presence of God and his holy angels, and pray that eternal wrath may rest upon me and mine, if I have not in this thing spoken the truth."[1] The king entirely believed the asseverations of Villeroy, and refused to allow him to be molested in any way. The ducs de Guise and de Mayenne, therefore, afterwards demanded that the same belief should be vouchsafed to their own most emphatic denial of the charge; but although at the time this requisition seemed plausible and just, yet as after events coincided with Salzedo's deposition—the precise personages even whom he had named being implicated—the real existence of the plot which he denounced has never been doubted.

monseigneur le duc de Brabant, d'Anjou, et d'Alençon, frère du Roy: Archives Curieuses, tome viii.

[1] Mém. de Nicholas de Neufville, Sieur de Villeroy, Secrétaire des Commandements des Rois Charles IX., Henri III., Henri IV., et Louis XIII.

Bellièvre arrived at Bruges with his colleague, and immediately proceeded to interrogate the criminal, whom M. d'Anjou delivered into their power to convey into France, such being the king's pleasure. Salzedo repeated his former depositions, adding only, "that he called God to witness he had never actually taken measures against the life of Monsieur; but that the object of his visit had been to spy out the forces and resources of the enemies of the king of Spain in Flanders, and report them by order of M. de Guise to the prince of Parma." The prisoner was then conveyed across the frontier into France, and conducted to the castle of Vincennes. Here he was again interrogated, and still persisted in his statements, which were reported to the king by Jerome Augenoust, whom Henry had appointed as president of the commission issued to try the criminal. The following morning, August 20th, the king repaired to Vincennes, accompanied by the queen-mother, by Birague, Bellièvre, Cheverny, de Thou, first president, and le Guesle, the attorney-general. The culprit was brought into the royal presence, and was examined by the lord keeper Cheverny. Salzedo, however, on this occasion stoutly denied all his previous statements, which he declared had been extorted by fear, and persisted in proclaiming MM. de Guise as the king's loyal subjects, who had never entered into treasonable negotiations at any time with the king of Spain. Salzedo was then, by the king's command, conducted to the Bastille; while Henry returned to Paris, and sending for Augenoust, he somewhat triumphantly informed him that "Salzedo had denied every article of his former deposition." Augenoust replied "that, foreseeing exceptions might be taken on this matter, as the prisoner had implicated many personages of the highest dignity, he had taken the precaution to conduct the examination of the accused in the presence of three of his majesty's

members of the High Court, whom he besought the king to summon." Henry replied by stating his perfect belief in the truth of the reports, as made to him both by Augenoust and by Bellièvre. Nevertheless, Augenoust detecting the *arrière pensée* in the mind of his majesty, who would fain have persuaded himself that the reported confessions of the accused had been grossly exaggerated, respectfully insisted that the king should summon the persons he had mentioned to corroborate his testimony; "for," said Augenoust, "it is essentially requisite that no doubt should remain on the mind of your majesty as to the veracity of the reports made to you concerning Salzedo." The king, therefore, consented that messengers should be despatched to fetch these individuals. In the chamber with the king were the personages who had been present at Vincennes when Salzedo was questioned before his majesty.

During the interval which elapsed Henry went aside and leaned against a casement which overlooked the courtyard of the Louvre, in great depression of spirits. After a time he called Augenoust, and, pointing to the great assemblage of noblemen who were walking below in the court, or playing at bowls, he said, sadly: "M. d'Augenoust, behold, here are many courtiers and assumed friends. Tell me, on how many of these men may I rely?"[1]

Presently the members summoned by Augenoust entered the presence.[2] The latter then stated to them that his majesty had that morning been present at Vincennes when Salzedo was interrogated by the chancellor, but that the criminal denied all his previous confessions. They had, therefore, been summoned to

[1] Relation particulière de la Mort de Salcedo. Archives Curieuses, tome x. Bibl. Imp. MSS. Dupuy, tome lxxxvii.

[2] These personages were the president Brisson, and MM. de Chartier, Perrot, and Michon, counsellors.

testify to the fact that the past avowals made by the prisoner had neither been falsified nor exaggerated. The confession made by Salzedo was then read over and attested, clause by clause, by the witnesses. Still unwilling to believe in the reality of so foul a conspiracy, Henry, during the evening, despatched Birague the exchancellor to examine the unhappy prisoner. Salzedo positively maintained that not a word which he had previously confessed was true, nor yet had those his fabrications been correctly given to his majesty. The following day, the fate of Salzedo was discussed by the council of state. De Thou, the venerable first president of the parliament of Paris, advised his majesty, as the culprit steadily persisted in retracting his confession, and as consequently no arrests of persons implicated by him could be made, not to suffer sentence of death to be executed upon the culprit; but to reserve so important a witness in captivity, ready to attest the guilt of any one of the nobles accused of traitorous correspondence with Spain, if at any future time their treasonable designs should be developed.[1] This advice was little to the taste of many members of the council, who saw themselves or their relatives implicated in the avowals of Salzedo. Moreover, the prosecution of the affair had altogether annoyed and wearied the king. Henry, therefore, gave his opinion that sentence of death ought to be pronounced and executed upon Salzedo; his majesty stating as a reason that, if the accused had been guilty of atrocious libels affecting the character and loyalty of many of his most illustrious subjects, his death was demanded as a righteous satisfaction to those so cruelly aspersed; when, on the other hand, if the charges made by the prisoner were true, the knowledge

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxv. p. 634. "Le président était d'avis de laisser Salcedo en vie pour intimider ses complices si la conjuration était réelle, et pour avoir de quoi les convaincre en besoin."

that Salzedo existed ready at any moment to testify to their guilty connivance in the projects of MM. de Guise, would probably drive such persons, out of sheer despair, into open and malignant treason. In deference to this opinion, the tribunal presided over by Augenoust condemned the accused to suffer death by being torn asunder by horses, after having first endured tortures ordinary and extraordinary.[1]

After the condemnation of the prisoner, it became more and more apparent that Henry totally disbelieved the frightful revelations made by the former; and even evinced doubt as to the veracity of the *procès verbal* of the interrogatories submitted for his perusal. Augenoust, therefore, and his colleagues, deeming it their duty to rouse the king to a full appreciation of the plots formed to subvert his authority by the great nobles of the realm, determined to induce Henry to be a concealed spectator of the last examination of the prisoner in the torture-chamber of the Palais on the day of his execution. Accordingly, at four o'clock in the morning of the 25th of October, Augenoust repaired to the Louvre, and sent through Camusat, the king's first *valet de chambre*, a message earnestly imploring to be admitted to a brief audience by his majesty on a matter that allowed of no delay. Henry, whose mind was perturbed and uneasy, immediately returned an answer in the affirmative. He then directed Camusat to give him a *robe-de-chambre*, and to bring the president to his bedside. Augenoust then addressed his royal master in most persuasive language, observing that the contradictory statements made by the prisoner having evidently produced some doubts in the mind of his majesty, it had been judged expedient by the presi-

[1] Copie de l'Arrest et Exécution de Salcedo, Gentelhomme Normant, le Roy et les Reynes présents. Bibl. Imp. MS. Béth. 8830, fol. 356. Octobre, 1582: à Paris.

dents of the criminal tribunal that he should be a concealed spectator of Salzedo's final interrogatory. The king listened with attention, and did not at first reply. He then asked "whether any of the kings, his predecessors, had assisted at similar spectacles?" "No, sire," replied Augenoust; "but let me assure your majesty that those sovereigns, your predecessors, who omitted to investigate similar enterprises, fared badly for their scruples." "I will, then, go with you," reluctantly responded Henry. Half an hour afterwards Henry entered a coach and was on his way to the Palais, accompanied only by Larchant, captain of the bodyguard. The king there took his seat behind a curtain drawn across one side of the terrible chamber. The criminal was brought from the Conciergerie, to which prison he had been transferred after his condemnation, in a coach escorted by a troop of archers and soldiers of the guard. As the vehicle drove into the courtyard of the Palais, a person amid the crowd of spectators exclaimed, "Ah, seigneur Salzedo, compromise not innocent and honest people!" The criminal on being led into the presence of his judges, the presidents Brisson and Augenoust, glanced at the frightful apparatus of torture around, and fell on his knees beseeching mercy, and promising a plenary confession. "What have you confessed?" asked Augenoust. Salzedo then recapitulated his previous revelations exactly as he had made them in the presence of the duc d'Anjou and Bellièvre; and concluded by taking a solemn oath that all he had stated was true. The prisoner was then bound and the water torture administered; but nothing further was elicited excepting his renewed protestations that he had already confessed all that he knew. Salzedo was then carried on a mattress to a cell, and left with a priest to prepare for the scaffold. Augenoust then advanced and drew back the curtain which hid his

majesty from view. Henry sat back in his chair with a countenance pallid and confused, and for some time made no reply to the greetings of those around. At length his majesty rose. "Messieurs," said he, with a deep sigh, "you have compelled me to witness a sight which, please God, I will never more see! Nevertheless, for the best part of my kingdom I would not have missed to hear with my own ears the confession of that miserable wretch Salzedo!" His majesty was then escorted to la Grande Chambre, where all the deputies saluted the king, having been previously informed by Augenoust of his presence in the Palais.[1]

The same day, October 25th, Salzedo suffered on a scaffold erected in La Place de Grève, in front of the Hôtel de Ville. By the intercession of the duchesse de Mercœur, sister-in-law of queen Louise, the torments of the unhappy criminal were abridged. His body was quartered and exposed over the four principal gates of Paris, and his head sent to Antwerp.[2] The king and the three queens, Catherine, Louise, and Marguerite, witnessed the spectacle from the windows of the Hôtel de Ville. Catherine's young granddaughter Christine, daughter of the duc de Lorraine, was observed to watch and report every incident on the scaffold to the king, who reposed in a chair at some short distance from a window shaded by a gauze blind. On the scaffold Salzedo a third time retracted his admissions, and died protesting the innocence of all the personages whom he had denounced. This denial was attributed to the

[1] Relation particulière de la Mort de M. de Salcedo. Archives Curieuses, tome x. De Thou, liv. lxxv.

[2] The Spanish ambassador remonstrated against the liberty which Henry took in sending the head of this criminal to Antwerp, a town under the dominion of Spain, though rebellious. The king negligently replied, "qu'il avoit envoyé cette tête au duc d'Alençon son frère pour en faire ce que bon lui sembleroit; et qu'il en fit des petits pâtés s'il voulait!"

counsels of the priest who ministered to his last hours in his cell at the Palais and on the scaffold. The duc d'Anjou, meantime, had caused the arrest and execution of one of Salzedo's accomplices in the Low Countries; but his principal colleague, one Francisco Baza, committed suicide in prison.

During these transactions the Portuguese expedition under Strozzi, that had first sailed to maintain the rights of the queen-mother on the crown of Portugal, and which had put back into harbour from stress of weather, again departed to support this time the claims of don Antonio, prior of Crato, whom her majesty had agreed to acknowledge as king of Portugal upon certain conditions. A few days after the execution of Salzedo, disastrous intelligence reached Paris of the destruction of this squadron, off the island of Terceira, by the Spanish fleet under the marquis de Santa Cruz. Strozzi fell mortally wounded in the combat; and when the fight terminated, he was barbarously stabbed again with a dirk and thrown overboard by order of Santa Cruz.[1] Don Antonio being therefore compelled to submit to his powerful rival Philip II., found a refuge in France, where the duc d'Anjou lent him his country house at Ruel, in which he ended his life in 1595.[2]

The king's pecuniary necessity had been gradually augmenting during the episode of the trial and condemnation of Salzedo. This affair for the moment disposed of, Henry began to fall back into his old mode of life; though his majesty being somewhat sobered by the startling facts thus revealed, his dissi-

[1] La Vie, Mort et Tombeau de Philippe de Strozzi, Amiral de l'Armée de Mer dressée par la Reyne Catherine de Medici en faveur du Roy D. Antoine Roy de Portugal: Archives Curieuses.

[2] Don Antonio lived at Ruel in great opulence. He had sixty servants; and was supplied daily, by order of the king, with two sheep, a quarter of beef, a calf, and fifty loaves: Lettres de Busbec. He left two sons, who both died without posterity.

pation took a religious turn, and he began to concoct a code for the establishment of a fresh order of Penitents. In the interval, however, the king proceeded in a characteristic style to replenish his coffers. The victims of the royal rapacity, at this season, were the wine-merchants of the capital, upon whom his majesty arbitrarily imposed a tax according to their means. Some individuals were mulcted in the sum of 1,000 crowns; others had to pay 800 crowns; while all had to bring the specified sum to the treasury within twenty-four hours, under pain of imprisonment. The king, during one of his expeditions to the convent of Bons Hommes of Nigeon, dreamed the very significant dream that the lions, panthers, and bears of his menagerie in the gardens of the Louvre had escaped from their dens, and rushed with open mouth to devour him. The reminiscences of this dream so haunted Henry that, on his return to Paris, he caused all his wild beasts to be shot, and never more could be induced again to provide his menagerie with denizens.[1]

The statutes of the Congregation de l'Annonciation de Notre Dame, as king Henry termed his new religious foundation, were revised and had received royal and papal approbation about the middle of Lent, 1583. These rules were as puerile as can be well imagined, and corresponded with the dress of the order. This consisted of a coarse canvas sack drawn over the head of the penitent, having apertures for the eyes, and wide sleeves. A hood of the same material was sown, by way of ornament, at the nape of the neck. The habit was confined at the waist by a hempen rope, from which a rosary of wooden beads depended. On the 25th of March, the Feast of the Annunciation of our Lady, Henry held the first chapter of his order in the church of Notre Dame. The papal nuncio, the bishop

[1] L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III.

of Rimini, officiated and received the oaths of the fraternity, while the Jesuit Auger, who had greatly insinuated himself into the king's confidence, preached the sermon. The rain fell in torrents; nevertheless, Henry proceeded in procession from the monastery of the Augustinians to the cathedral. His majesty marched on foot, muffled in his sack, and was preceded by the cardinal de Guise bearing aloft a cross of silver. The duc de Mayenne followed the king in like attire and carrying a scourge, which he pretended to use upon the royal shoulders. Then followed the cardinal-chancellor Birague and his colleague the lord keeper Cheverny,[1] the ducs de Joyeuse and d'Epernon, the judges of the realm, Villequier, governor of Paris, and the most illustrious of the courtiers, all wearing the habit. A train of choristers, also wearing sacks, followed, mumbling the litany of the Virgin. In many parts of the capital this grotesque procession was greeted with shouts of laughter by the spectators, who mimicked what they termed the "faux bourdon" of the unfortunate choristers, whose voices were stifled in their sacks. The duc de Guise had peremptorily refused to share in this mummery, but stood in stately guise at a window to see the procession pass. A sheet of paper, having the following verse inscribed, was afterwards found blowing about the street in which Guise and many of his friends had surveyed the procession:—

Après avoir pillé la France
Et tout le peuple dépouillé,
N'est ce pas belle pénitence,
De se couvrir d'un sac mouillé?

The lines were read with avidity, though the verse

[1] The title of chancellor was never withdrawn except in cases of attainder, even when the great seal passed into the hand of a successor; the title of lord keeper was assumed by the de facto chancellor during the life of his predecessor.

had little point; and hundreds of copies were circulated in print over the capital during the following few days.

On arriving at Notre Dame the penitents knelt before the high altar, and devoutly intoned the hymn "Salve Regina." The badge of the fraternity was then conferred upon each with a suitable admonition by the nuncio. On the evening of Good Friday the same procession was enacted over again by torchlight, the Penitents of Notre Dame being joined by a body of Flagellants. The brother of the duc de Joyeuse, M. de St. Dizier, however, fell on this occasion a victim of the royal folly; for exposure to the cold and damp atmosphere brought on so severe an attack of dysentery, that he died during the following day.

Henry's exhibition was parodied in numberless forms by the laughter-loving citizens of Paris. So great a degradation had the infatuated king inflicted upon the most august and venerable dignities of the realm, that puppets were paraded about the streets muffled in sacks, and publicly sold ticketed with the names of "the king," "the chancellor," "the first president of the sackcloth parliament," and like irreverent allusions to the executive. Even his majesty's pages took diversion one evening in imitating the procession, and marched round the courtyard of the Louvre with handkerchiefs over their faces, in which they had cut round holes for their eyes. Henry was extremely incensed when he heard of this mimicry, and caused one hundred and twenty of the pages and lackeys, who had joined the *escapade*, to be flogged in public.

The king's penitential fervour soon passed away, and he spent the festival of Easter in the indulgence of the utmost licence. Attended by his riotous band, Henry made forays into the streets, intruding, masked, into the private houses of the burghers, and there sanction-

ing disgraceful acts of violence. These alternations of bigotry and licence were yearly becoming more frequent. The health of the king suffered severely from his excesses; he then became depressed in spirits, stern, suspicious, and intractable. The easy good nature of Henry had formerly induced his nobles to look with a lenient eye on his excesses; his majesty seldom, during the early years of his reign, resented a satirical epigram or a witty caricature, and was the first to laugh at or to condemn his own follies. The king, however, never degraded himself by intemperance in meat or drink. Wine Henry never drank, nor strong beverages of any description; the real majesty of his deportment, therefore, and his princely address, never lost their influence when, laying aside his mummeries, he resumed the dignity appropriate to his position. This abstinence from intoxicating drinks gave Henry, moreover, a manifest advantage over his nobles whenever, as was too frequently the case, their love of carouse overpowered their sense of self-respect; and the sharpness of the royal repartees was remembered in more sober hours.

The pulpits of Paris, nevertheless, rang with severe denunciations against the royal dissipations, and the ludicrous exhibitions of the Penitents, which the clergy justly considered as calculated to bring contempt on the faith. "Ah, miserable hypocrites and atheists!" declaimed one orator from the metropolitan pulpit of Notre Dame, "was not the spit laden with choice meats on the eve of Good Friday for the delectation of your carnal appetites? Hypocrites! you mock God beneath your hideous masks! You carry your scourge at your girdles, instead of using it on your shoulders; as stripes for your folly can you never receive enough."

To one of these uncompromising censors Henry

gave the sum of 400 francs to buy, as his majesty sent word, "sugar and honey to allay the acerbity of the preacher's temperament." Another, the orator of Notre Dame, Maurice Poncet, the king branded publicly as "an old fool," and caused him to be carried off suddenly from his monastery to Melun, where he remained in exile for some weeks. Before Poncet departed for Melun, he was visited by the duc d'Epernon, who, entering the chamber in which the preacher was incarcerated, said, with a swagger, "Well, M. Notre Maitre! I am told that you make people laugh famously at your sermons?—This is wrong; a great orator like yourself should preach to edify, and not to divert." "Monsieur," replied the bold monk, "I ask permission to inform you that I preach the word of God; and no one comes to mock at my sermons, if it be not one of your own courtly adherents and sinners. Nevertheless, I have not made half as many persons laugh, as you have caused others to weep!"

The anger and disgust of queen Catherine were strongly evinced at her son's frivolity. Her majesty now seldom visited the Louvre, but resided at the Tuileries, or in her palace the hôtel de Soissons. As for Epernon and Joyeuse, the queen utterly discountenanced their pretensions, and never would tolerate their interference. The Jesuit Auger, confessor to his majesty, likewise fell under the displeasure of Catherine, and she angrily reproached him that, owing to his pernicious counsels, the king neglected the affairs of his realm; and that, from being a king, Auger had transformed her son into a lazy monk. Many were now Catherine's melancholy communings alone in the chamber of her lofty tower. Her retrospect was sad—her future ominous. The son whom she had pampered and favoured above all her other children revelled

in licentious indolence, the like of which not even the annals of *les rois fainéants* afforded example: he was childless, and likely to remain so; despised by the people, and ridiculed by his nobles. M. d'Anjou, unstable and capricious, was tossed by his puerile resentments from one party to another—the toy of all, and his interests the rallying-point of none. His health was shattered by the excitements and anxiety attending his Flemish campaign; and Catherine's maternal fears were roused by the private intelligence which she received concerning the fits of utter exhaustion now frequently experienced by the duke; and of the bleeding from the lungs, which followed unusual exertion on his part. The queen's soothsayers boldly predicted the approaching demise of the duke, and Catherine put perfect faith in their divinations. The next claimants for the crown, which she had preserved through such innumerable perils, were Henri de Navarre and his beautiful wife, her only surviving daughter. But Henri was a Calvinist, and her own mortal enemy; he was stricken with excommunication, and his principality lay under interdict; moreover, he gloried in avowing himself the hereditary and personal foe of Philip II., king of Spain.

His wife Marguerite, who would with him ascend the throne of her kindred, had become the scandal of Paris by the publicity of her *liaison* with the marquis de Chanvallon; while the inmates of the hôtel de la Couture Sainte Catherine, the abode of the queen of Navarre, testified that in nothing had their royal mistress degenerated from the proverbial profligacy of the Valois. The king and queen of Navarre were also childless. Catherine felt persuaded that genius, such as she had then no reason to ascribe to her son-in-law, could alone overcome similar disabilities; or induce the French

nation to accept sovereigns of position and conduct so equivocal. Condé, the next heir to the crown, was a widower with one daughter; a man of saturnine temper, aggrieved and soured by adversity. Beyond this, the succession in the male line of Valois devolved on the two unmarried brothers of Condé; then on the duc de Montpensier. Under these circumstances Catherine's thoughts naturally reverted to the rights of the offspring of her daughters. So also did Philip II., king of Spain, reflect—the husband of Catherine's eldest daughter, who was the mother of the two infantas, Isabel and Catalina. The queen's second daughter Claude espoused the duc de Lorraine, and died in 1575, leaving two sons and several daughters. It was on her eldest grandson François de Lorraine, therefore, that Catherine's political aspirations became fixed. He was a Frenchman, the future chieftain of that house whose turbulence had embittered her own regency and the reigns of the sons of Henry II., and a prince whose interests she had every right to suppose that his kinsman of Guise would espouse. The duc de Guise, however, held other views; being deceived by the fallacious promises of the king of Spain, and by a mistaken estimate of his hold on the affections of the people: neither had Guise sufficiently appreciated either the ability of the king of Navarre, or the ruthless ferocity with which Henry III. would assail an apparently successful enemy.

Other grave anxieties oppressed the mind of queen Catherine at this season, concerning the position of the duc d'Anjou in the Netherlands, and the refusal of Elizabeth queen of England to complete the matrimonial contract drawn, signed, and exchanged with so ceremonious a form. The ostensible reason for her refusal, assigned by queen Elizabeth in her letter to Henry III., is the relation and secret correspondence maintained by

the French ambassador in London with Mary Stuart. Great as was this mortification, it was nothing comparatively, in the esteem of the queen-mother, to the apprehensions excited by the news of the disasters of the French in Antwerp during the autumn of 1583. The position of the duc d'Anjou demanded the greatest tact and forbearance. Though he had been proclaimed duc de Brabant, Monsieur was not permitted to exercise sovereign sway. The finances were managed by the members of the States without reference to the will of their duke; they disposed of all offices, and they limited at pleasure the number of French troops in the pay of their nominal sovereign. The prince of Orange possessed in double the power and influence of Monsieur. In vain the duke applied to the French government to relieve him from a position so onerous. Catherine, occupied with the trial of Salzedo, replied, "that Monsieur in his present condition could not hope to obtain succour from France." "My son, if you had possession of five or six good citadels, so that you might be assured of a free passage to and from this realm into Flanders, I think the king might be induced to aid you. As it is now, they will squeeze out of you all they can, and then will drive you away poor, dishonoured, and forlorn."[1] The queen, nevertheless, had induced Henry to send the maréchal de Biron to Monsieur's aid; while a stringent edict was issued, decreeing various pains and penalties to all French subjects aiding the enemies of Monsieur brother of the king, with arms or provisions. The language of his royal mother roused the duke to make the attempt, by which she gave him to understand that the aid of France might be purchased. He desired, moreover, to leave the Netherlands for a visit to the court of England, to try and move the

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Règne de Henri III., liv. vii. p. 480.

determination of Elizabeth; and afterwards to make a sojourn in Paris. The duke, therefore, had proposed to nominate Biron governor of Flanders during his absence. The marshal, after some consideration, declined the office, unless he had certain fortresses assigned to him for a retreat in case of intestine tumult. The duke then boldly proposed to Biron to seize the citadel of Antwerp, in which town they were then abiding. He called to mind the suspicion with which the Netherlanders regarded their Gallic allies—a hatred plainly manifested after the assassin Jaureguy had attempted the life of the prince of Orange at Bruges,[1] when but for the discovery of documents, implicating the Spanish government, on the body of the assassin, the populace would have risen and slain the French.[2] The attempt was at length resolved, though against the oath which the duke took at his inauguration, and in direct contravention of every treaty made between himself and the States. The young duc de Montpensier, when apprized of the project on the day appointed for its execution, refused to sanction so flagrant an infraction, by saying, "Monseigneur, until now the honour of our house has been stainless: I am not now going to sully it." Remonstrances, unfortunately, proved of no avail, and upon some pretext the duke caused his army to advance closer to the gates of Antwerp. Monsieur on the 17th day of January quitted Antwerp, attended by a strong detachment of troops, under pretence of reviewing his army, leaving M. de Fervaques in command of the garrison. The drawbridge was lowered to admit of the egress of Monsieur, and the cavalcade passed the

[1] During the month of March, 1582.

[2] "Jamais le duc d'Anjou n'eust si belle peur, et il dit depuis que de sa vie il n'avoit esté si devot et ne pensa mieux mourir."—Economies Royales, Politiques et Militaires, p. 86.

gate. The French troops, however, instead of following their master, took possession of the bridge, and being reinforced by detachments from the main army, which suddenly appeared, attempted to fight their way back again into the town. The French garrison immediately joined in the assault, and the most terrible conflict ensued in the streets of Antwerp. The citizens fought with admirable valour: they repulsed the entrance of fresh troops, and triumphantly succeeded in regaining possession of the gate of the town. The duc d'Anjou, perceiving the adverse state of affairs, feigned that the tumult arose from misunderstanding, and presenting himself at the gate demanded admittance. But a merciless slaughter of the French had commenced in Antwerp; and the infuriated populace turned the guns of the citadel on the duke, and flatly denied him entrance. Twelve hundred Frenchmen perished in the subsequent massacre, and Fervaques was taken prisoner, with other officers. Monsieur, irritated and mortified beyond expression, retired to the monastery of St. Bernard, where he spent the night. The following day, as no signal of concession had been extended by the indignant city, he crossed the Scheldt to Tenremonde, from whence he retreated to Dunkirk.[1] When the news of the duke's shameful retreat from before Antwerp was imparted to Catherine, the queen, in despair at the complications rising on every side, exclaimed, while tears of mortification fell from her eyes, "Would to God, my son, that thou hadst died rather than to have been the cause of this slaughter, and of the trouble and difficulties in which it will involve France!" The king instantly despatched Bellièvre and Mirabel to aid his brother

[1] Lettres de Busbecq. De Thou, 77. Mathieu. Duplessis Mornay. Richy;. Discours véritable de l'Enterprise d'Anvers. Apologie des Etats de Flandre, 1644.

with their counsels, and commanded a detachment of the army to advance to the frontier. The duc de Guise, meanwhile, who had now established close relations with queen Catherine, immediately visited her majesty, and offered to go in person to the assistance of the duc d'Anjou, provided that a body of 8,000 men was placed under his command. "Wherever Monsieur may be, be sure, madame, that I will join him and rescue him from peril!" said the duke. Catherine gratefully accepted the proposition, provided that it met with the king's approval. By every courier, the queen expected to hear that her son was a prisoner in the hands of the Spanish viceroy; or had been compelled to surrender to the army of the States, to abide the consequences of his infraction of treaties. The queen, therefore, strongly urged Henry to permit of the departure of the duc de Guise. It so happened that Diane,[1] the widow of the late maréchal de Montmorency, was present at this discussion. Madame de Montmorency was greatly esteemed by the king, and she was almost the only lady of the court whose reputation he had not in some way assailed. The very name of Guise was abhorrent to the ears of his majesty. Addressing madame de Montmorency, therefore, Henry asked her what she thought of the project of sending the duc de Guise into the Low Countries at the head of 8,000 men? Diane replied, "I hold it as if your majesty, in the design of ridding yourself of Monsieur your brother, should send an assassin or an executioner to his aid! Sire! remember the confession of Salzedo!"[2] Henry thereupon peremptorily declined to sanction the appointment; for from the commencement of his reign it had been the royal policy never to intrust a command-in-chief to the duc

[1] Diane de France, legitimated daughter of Henry II. by Philippe Duc.

[2] Scevole de Ste. Marthe.

de Guise. On all occasions the king had chosen to avail himself of the military services of Mayenne in preference to those of his elder brother; and thus the duke's systematic exclusion from state affairs, as from palace influence, tended not a little to aggravate his resentment. The king, therefore, resolved that no fresh troops should be despatched to the succour of the duke, who was now in comparative safety at Dunkirk, pending the mediation of Bellièvre and Mirabel with the States-general. Intelligence being also soon received that the apology which the envoys were empowered to offer to the citizens of Antwerp, for "*la seule faute de M. d'Anjou, qui avait exposé sa vie et ses biens pour leur salut,*" had been benignantly received, and that the States consented to accept the mediation of the king, all hostile measures were forthwith abandoned.[1]

The court, during these transactions, continued a very focus of contention and profligacy. Paris swarmed with libels respecting the projects and private lives of all the members of the royal family; and pamphlets innumerable were published, setting forth the imperial descent of the house of Lorraine and its ancient superiority over the Capetian race. The king's patience was sometimes reduced to the last extremity, so utterly did he find himself involved and assailed. He feared the Guises, and he hated the king of Navarre. Exasperated sometimes beyond control by the insolence of the partisans of Lorraine and by their artful misrepresentations, Henry broke forth into fury and commanded that their fabrications should be exposed and their agents punished. The queen-mother and her daughter-in-law queen Louise invariably then interposed to sooth the royal resentment, and to explain away any facts disadvantageous to the duc de Guise. Often, when unconvinced Henry wrathfully withdrew from their pleadings, and retired to his

[1] De Thou: Lettres de Busbecq.

cabinet, the expostulations of the duc de Joyeuse commenced in their behalf; for from the period of his marriage with the sister of the queen the duke had become the active ally of the princes of Lorraine. The two sisters-in-law of the king, the duchesses de Joyeuse and de Mercœur, and his niece Christine de Lorraine, united in persuading the king to take umbrage at no assumptions, however flagrant, on the part of Guise or his brothers. Everywhere, in the private chambers of the Louvre, the cabinet, the army, the parliament, and the city, the name of Lorraine was dominant, representing all that the realm possessed most illustrious in genius, talent, military ability, diplomacy, virtue, chivalrous demeanour, and beauty. The name of Valois conveyed alone to the mind of the people the image of a reigning prince sunk in sensuality, an heir-presumptive, fickle, frivolous, and incapable, and a princess of superb beauty, indeed, but depraved and of incorrigible levity. "Never have I seen or witnessed anything like the misery and dissensions of the court," wrote madame de Coème, mother of the princesse de Conty, to the duc de Nemours; "it is full of envy, malice, and discord. The nobles are incensed at the treatment which Monsieur has met with in Flanders. I have never seen the queen-mother so distressed and anxious —so afflicted is her majesty that all her servants grieve. There are so many malcontents that their name is Legion; and as for myself, I am thankful to be here at this beautiful castle of Gaillon, to recruit my spirits after a sojourn in Paris of some eight months."[1] To add to these *tracasseries*, a feud broke out between the

[1] Lettre de madame de Coème au duc de Nemours: MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8858, fol. 56. This lady seems quite overwhelmed with the picture presented by the court, and promises to impart some startling incidents to the duc de Nemours when walking with him in his beautiful gardens at Annecy.

dukes, each being jealous of the favour shown by his majesty to the other. Joyeuse went with the onward stream; Epernon, whose duchy was situated in Guyenne, declared for the king of Navarre, and espoused his interests as openly as he deemed it expedient. The duc d'Epernon was the favoured courtier of the two; the aristocratic and refined Joyeuse never obtained such ascendency over the king as did la Valette, with his bold reckless disposition, and coarse mirth. To emancipate himself from some of these tribulations, the king at this period sent the duc de Joyeuse to Rome, at the head of a superb embassy, ostensibly for the purpose of fulfilling a vow which his majesty had made to visit the shrine of Notre Dame de Loretto, in order that, by the intercession of the Holy Virgin, queen Louise might have a son. The guerdon which Henry offered to the Virgin was the construction of a new chapel in the church of Loretto. The political objects of the duke's mission were to prevail upon Sixtus V. to grant a bull, authorizing the alienation of church property to the value of several millions of crowns; to persuade the pope to issue a sentence of excommunication against the duc de Montmorency, who persisted in holding the government of Languedoc which his majesty wished to confer upon the father of Joyeuse; thirdly, to solicit a cardinal's hat for Charles de Bourbon, brother of the prince de Condé, and for his own brother François de Joyeuse, archbishop of Narbonne. Pope Sixtus V. blandly refused to sanction the ecclesiastical subsidy, unless petitioned to do so by the Gallican church. In respect to the duc de Montmorency, the pope—who then disowned all support of the League, and who beheld with indignation the manner in which the descendant of the first Christian baron of France was persecuted by the government—plainly declared "that he believed Montmorency to be both a faithful son of the church

and a true subject, and that the bull of excommunication ought rather to be launched against his persecutors. And as to what you tell me, that the king, my very dear son, has sent you hither to inform me thoroughly of the condition of his kingdom, I fear that his majesty himself requires information on that point. Facts, monseigneur, are to be believed before your vain and frivolous presumptions."[1] The sturdy old pope continued in this strain to administer a reproof to the duke, reprimanding him personally for seeking to augment the enmity between the king and Montmorency, to the ruin of the kingdom. Joyeuse was so affected by this objurgation from the supreme head of Christendom that, on quitting the Vatican, he took to his bed with bilious fever. The pope's angry reproaches, nevertheless, sprang not so much from zeal for the pacification of France, as from irritation at a project said to be entertained by Joyeuse and his royal master, to seize Avignon and the Comté Venaissin, and to compel the Holy See to exchange this territory for the marquisate of Saluzzo. Avignon and its adjacent district was then to be given to Joyeuse, with the title of prince.

Meanwhile an occurrence happened of so scandalous and public a nature as to rivet the attention of Europe on the unhappy scenes of folly ever agitating the court of France. "Africa has never been more fertile in wonderful phenomena than is the France of this reign in startling events," wrote the imperial ambassador to his court. The hatred between queen Marguerite and the king her brother continued to exist without abatement; though its public manifestation had not been so frequent now that the queen of Navarre resided in a palace of her own, conformably to the advice given by Catherine to her daughter on her return to the capital. After the nature of the overture made by Philip II. to

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxviii.

the king of Navarre had been divulged—by which her own divorce and the re-marriage of Henri with the infanta Doña Catalina[1] were proposed—Marguerite had lived in constant apprehension lest some such scheme might again be discussed. She was aware of the little hold which she possessed on the affection or the esteem of her husband; while the hate felt towards her by Henry III. would, she also feared, render her repudiation the welcome bond of his reconciliation with the king of Navarre. Marguerite, therefore, looked with jealous suspicion on the frequent communications which passed between the king and the duc de Joyeuse, who was then in Rome—those long letters written upon two large sheets of paper entirely in the king's handwriting, respecting which Busbecq, the imperial ambassador, descants in amazement. In these epistles Marguerite ascertained that her proceedings in the capital were, at any rate, detailed by his majesty with a ribald jocularity highly diverting to his correspondent. With that reckless daring which characterized so many of her actions, Marguerite resolved to satisfy herself as to the nature of this correspondence. One of the royal couriers, therefore, was assailed, when at the distance of a few stages from Paris, by a party of four armed men masked, who, after wounding him dangerously, abstracted his packet of letters which was addressed to M. de Joyeuse.[2] When this adventure happened the king was on his road to rejoin queen Louise at the baths of Bourbon; but after he received information of the event, his majesty immediately returned to Paris in the most uncontrollable fury to investigate the matter, as circumstances attended the outrage which seemed to affix its perpetra-

[1] Second daughter of Philip II. and of Elizabeth de Valois. The infanta Catalina finally espoused Charles Emmanuel, duke of Savoy.

[2] Lettres d'Auger Gislen, Seigneur de Busbecq, Ambassadeur de Rodolphe II.: Lettre 22. Paris, 10 Août, 1583.

tion on his sister. The life which the imprudent Marguerite was leading rendered a scrutiny into her conduct peculiarly undesirable. The marquis de Chanvallon,[1] who had been dismissed from the household of the duc d'Anjou for his indiscreet revelation of some trivial secret concerning his royal master to his friends in Paris, had been taken by Marguerite into her service, and resided with the queen in her hôtel de la Couture Ste. Catherine. The familiarity of their intercourse soon excited public scandal: reports the most blasting to the fame of the queen of Navarre became current; until at length it was affirmed that during the preceding months of June or July queen Marguerite had given birth to a male child, of which Chanvallon was the father.[2] This accusation is too strongly confirmed by proofs to admit of a doubt as to its accuracy; yet so lost was Marguerite to a sense of her degradation and the foul stain that she had inflicted on her illustrious name, that the orgies of the hôtel Ste. Catherine continued with unabated profligacy. The letters written at this period by Marguerite and her paramour Chanvallon were preserved by some officious hand, and now remain a memorial against her in the archives of the Bibliothèque Imperiale.[3] The king, it is stated, had obtained accurate information concerning the irregularities of his sister's life from a waiting-woman named Marguerite, the daughter of a tailor, who was herself the mistress of one of

[1] Jacques de Harlay, marquis de Chanvallon, grand ecuyer du duc d'Anjou, mort en 1630. The marquis was one of the most handsome men of the court. Dupleix, p. 411. Anselme, tome viii. p. 804.

[2] Ibid.: Bibl. Imp. MSS. Portef. Fontanieu, 341–342. Amelot de la Houssaye: M. Historiques et Politiques, tome ii. p. 69.

[3] MSS. Bibl. Imp. Recueil de Conrard, tome v. p. 113. Guessard: Mém. et Lettres de Marguerite de Valois. In these letters Marguerite terms Chanvallon, "son beau tout, seul soleil de son âme, sa vie, beau miracle de la nature, ses beaux yeux, seuls soleil de mon âme par eux tout feu, toute flamme!"

Henry's chamberlains.[1] Upon this information Henry prepared to act, yielding alone to his wild impulses of fury. Unfortunately the queen-mother was absent from Paris, on a visit to her son M. d'Anjou at Boulogne, who had been taken seriously ill while at Dunkirk with a vomiting of blood from the lungs. Marguerite, therefore, utterly unconscious of the outrage that awaited her, repaired to a ball at the Louvre on the evening following his majesty's return to the capital, at which, in the absence of the two queens Catherine and Louise, her rank entitled her to preside. At the height of the festivity, when the royal saloons were most crowded with guests, the king, attended by his usual suite of cavaliers, approached the dais upon which queen Marguerite sat, and commenced in a loud voice to reproach her with the dissoluteness of her life. In a tone of passionate vindictiveness his majesty recapitulated all the scandalous stories current; and then alluded to her intrigue with the marquis de Chanvallon, who was present, and to the birth of the child, the offspring of that *liaison*.[2] Henry then overwhelmed the unfortunate Marguerite with the grossest abuse; he publicly taunted her with all her previous intrigues, and named the cavaliers, including the duc de Guise and Turenne, whom his majesty was pleased to term "her sycophants and lovers." Finally, Henry ordered his sister forthwith to retire from his presence, and

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, vol. i. Dérèglemens de Henri III. Ined.

[2] "Le roi a reproché publiquement à la reine de Navarre ses intrigues et dérèglemens, lui nommant tous les amants qu'elle a eu depuis son mariage, l'accusant d'avoir eu un fils d'un commerce adultère, précisant tellement les dates et les lieux qu'il sembloit avoir été témoin des faits qu'il citoit."—Lettres de Busbecq à l'Empereur Rodolphe II.: Lettre 23. Dupleix. "Le fils de Marguerite et de Chanvallon vit encore. Il est prêtre Capucin nommé Père Ange."—Journal de la Vie du Maréchal de Bassompierre. Mezeray: Bibl. Imp. Portf. Fontanieu.

leave Paris within twelve hours.[1] Marguerite, it is related, during this terrible ordeal, listened with the greatest outward composure, and never uttered a word.[2] When the king concluded his *tirade*, she made a profound courtesy and quitted the Louvre, followed only by Chanvallon and two ladies,[3] her intimate associates. This slender mark of sympathy, it will be seen, the king took care to avenge. The following morning early, the king sent another message to his sister, reiterating his commands that she should quit Paris before nightfall, "as her majesty would be more suitably placed under the protection of the king of Navarre; for at the court of France her presence was the cause of more evil than benefit." The king, moreover, issued commands for the arrest of Chanvallon; but the latter, by the advice of his friends, and especially of queen Marguerite, had secured his safety by an immediate flight for the German frontier on quitting the Louvre.[4]

Marguerite, meanwhile, maintained her proud and fearless demeanour, and employed a part of the night and the following morning in writing letters containing a temperate but resolute denial of the charges made against her by the king, which she sent to the princes of Lorraine, and to the principal personages of the court, deeming "such a contradiction more suitable to her royal station, than to have publicly retorted the

[1] "Sa majesté ordonna à la reyne de delivrer sur le champ la cour de sa présence contagieuse."—D'Aubigne: Hist. Universelle, tome ii.

[2] "La reine pleine de confusion n'a paru avoir rien à dire pour sa justification."—Lettres de Busbecq.

[3] Madame de Duras and mademoiselle de Béthune, whom the king branded as "une vermine très pernicieuse."

[4] "Harlay de Chanvallon s'est sauvé en Allemagne. Ce Chanvallon est d'une noblesse très douteuse, mais sa douceur, sa jeunesse, et sa beauté lui ont acquis la première place parmi les amants de la reyne de Navarre. On m'assure que la reyne-mère a pris en haine sa fille à cause de cette vie déréglée."—Lettre de Busbecq à sa Majesté Imperiale. Paris ce 15 Septembre, 1583.

abusive epithets of her brother and king." Marguerite's cool ability generally extracted the sting from the king's most vindictive assault; her consummate assumption of innocence in matters afterwards proved against her, forms not the least wonderful faculty of the remarkable character of this princess.

The royal decree for her banishment from the court of France, Marguerite, however, did not consider it wise to dispute. She accordingly departed from Paris on Tuesday, the 9th of August, attended by madame de Duras and mademoiselle de Béthune, and proceeded to Bourg-la-Reine, where she dined. During her sojourn in this place, the king passed through on his road to the castle of Montargis; but his majesty did not salute his sister, or take any notice of her presence. Marguerite having finished her repast, continued her journey towards the village of Palaiseau, where she was to spend the night. When about half-way to this latter place the queen's litter was suddenly surrounded by sixty archers of the royal guard, under the command of Larchant. The curtains of the litter were then rudely torn open, and Larchant, presenting an order of arrest signed by Henry, commanded her majesty to alight. A scene of shameful violence then ensued; the litter was searched, every article and paper it contained being seized, in order to be forwarded to Montargis for the royal inspection. The masks, or tourets-de-nez, worn by madame de Duras and mademoiselle de Béthune, were torn from their faces; and they were subjected to the most scandalous search by certain archers of the guard, who repeatedly struck the ladies, and commanded them to give up any papers which they might carry hidden amid their habiliments.[1] Ma-

[1] Hist. de la Vie de Duplessis Mornay, liv. i. p. 71. Mém. du duc de Sully. L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III. MSS. Dupuy Bibl. Imp. vol. i.

dame de Duras and her companion were then formally placed in arrest upon the most odious charge[1] by Larchant, and compelled to enter a litter, which conveyed them to Montargis, escorted by a detachment of archers. Marguerite was then directed to enter her litter, which proceeded to the lodging prepared for her majesty at Palaiseau, and at which place various members of her household had repaired to attend their royal mistress to Châtelleraud, whither she was proceeding. The queen's first physician, her secretary, her equerry, and M. de Lodon her first gentleman usher, were then placed under arrest, and sent to Montargis. The indignities to which the unfortunate Marguerite was subjected were not even then terminated. In the dead of the night Larchant rudely entered her chamber, and compelling her to rise, searched her bed and coffers, in obedience to a mandate forwarded to him from Montargis. No trace, however, of the letters stolen from the courier despatched to the duc de Joyeuse could be found; nor indeed any documents calculated to serve the malevolent intents of the king. Overpowered by the unmanly insults to which she had been subjected, the haughty spirit of Marguerite was temporarily subdued. She bitterly exclaimed that she knew no princess on earth so miserable and persecuted as herself, excepting the queen of Scots. "Would that some charitable hand might administer to me poison, so that my calamitous life may end; but, alas! alas! I have neither friend nor enemy so true and ardent."[2] "That restless spirit," says d'Aubigné, speaking of the queen of Navarre, "came to great griefs; for her majesty found it impossible, while so-

[1] "On accusoit ces dames d'incontinence, et d'avortements procurés, etc."—Dupleix. L'Estoile. Mezeray. Vie de Marguerite de Valois par Mongez.

[2] Lettre de Busbecq, No. 23.

journing at the court of the king her brother, to avoid offending him and the minions by defaming their morals and by commenting on their voluptuous excesses."

At Montargis Henry was pursuing, meanwhile, an investigation into his sister's conduct. Madame de Duras and mademoiselle de Béthune were subjected to two separate interrogatories in the presence of the king, as were also all the persons arrested, though nothing criminatory to the queen of Navarre was elicited.[1] The ladies were finally sent to the Bastille to answer for the crimes of which they were accused; but on the return of queen Catherine they immediately regained their liberty. The king next wrote to the king of Navarre a flippant and insulting relation "of the adventures which had recently happened to the queen his wife," enclosing a minute of the examination of Marguerite's ladies and officers, yet commanding him to receive her at the court of Nérac. Henry then sent his sister word that she might continue her journey to rejoin her consort without fear of further molestation. Marguerite availed herself of the permission, and withdrew to Vendôme, from whence she wrote letters to the king of Navarre[2] demanding vengeance for the affront, and protesting her innocence. She likewise wrote to the pope, to her mother queen Catherine, to her brother the duc d'Anjou, and to the duc de Guise. "The king, now his rage is over, already repents having branded his own blood with infamy," writes the impe-

[1] L'Estoile: Journal de Henri III.—Harangue au Roi Henri III. faite par M. de Pibrac pour le Roy de Navarre: Archives Curieuses, vol. x.

[2] "La reyne envoye un manifeste à son mari par un gentilhomme, disant que si ce que son frère avoit dit étoit vray que c'étoit à luy de la punir; mais non au roy de la renvoyer; car cette (dernière) injure étoit faite au mari seul, et sans sujet."—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, vol. lxxxvii.

rial ambassador. "It is notorious that the king suffered himself to be betrayed into the committal of this act of fury from his resentment at the death of the courier whom he was sending to the duc de Joyeuse. All persons, acquainted with the character of the queen of Navarre, predict that she will soon find ample expedients to avenge the flagrant insult which she has received."

The intelligence of this *fracas* created great consternation at the court of Navarre. The misconduct of the queen, and the insults which she had received, were known at Pau before the arrival of king Henry's courier. The king of Navarre immediately sent an express to his consort, indignantly requesting her not to presume to continue her journey into Béarn until she had vindicated herself of the crimes of which she was accused;[1] while he despatched MM. Duplessis Mornay and d'Aubigné to Henry, who was then sojourning in Lyons, to demand an explanation of his outrageous proceedings. "The king of Navarre demands, sire, that if the queen his consort, and your majesty's sister, be guilty of the crimes of which she has been accused by you, that her punishment may be exemplary; if, on the contrary, she has been calumniated, the king desires equally the chastisement of her slanderers,"[2] said M. Duplessis. Henry sullenly replied that he had been misled by false reports as to the amount of his sister's misconduct; and that now it was the desire of the queen his mother, whose arrival was hourly expected, and his own, that the queen of Navarre should be reconciled with the king her husband, that

[1] "Le roy de Navarre pria la reyne sa femme par deux ou trois dépêches pour l'honneur de tous deux de ne s'advancer point vers lui jusques à ce que la dite satisfaction fut effectuée."—Harangue de Pibrac.

[2] Lettres de Busbecq. Hist. de la Vie de Duplessis Mornay, liv. i.

he was weary of the controversy, and had so written to his brother-in-law. "But, sire, what will the princes of Christendom say if the king of Navarre receives back again his wife without explanation or reparation, after her repute has been so cruelly sullied by your majesty?"—"Say?" exclaimed Henry, haughtily; "say? these said princes will say that the king of Navarre has received back again the sister of his king. What can he do more or less?" D'Aubigné then, indignant at the unwarrantable tyranny of the king, replied by stating that his royal master had determined not to receive queen Marguerite at his court unless her reputation was cleared, and reparation as signal as the affront which she had received conceded.[1] "Go back again to the king your master, since so you dare to term him, and say, that if such be the course he intends to take, I will place such a yoke on his neck as should bend the back of a potentate mighty as the Grand Seignior. Go and tell him so! go! Get out of my court! Your master is well served by such paltry servants as yourselves!"[2] When Henry's undignified passion had subsided, d'Aubigné replied, "Sire, my master has long borne the heavy burden which you threaten. Nevertheless, he places his life, his person, and his resources at your disposal, but his honour never!" Before Henry had leisure to reply, the door of the audience chamber opened, and Catherine entered. "Messieurs," said she, angrily, addressing the ambassadors, "I entered merely to request you to assure M. mon beau-fils that those rascals and knaves who presumed to slander my daughter to her brother shall die for it." "Madame, we require nobler repara-

[1] "D'Aubigné luy remit entre les mains l'honneur de son alliance, et celuy de son amitié."—Hist. Universelle, tome ii. p. 415.

[2] Ibid.

tion," responded Duplessis Mornay; "hogs were not slaughtered at the shrine of Diana."[1] Catherine's displeasure had been intense, when she learned the fresh *imbroglio* in which the folly of the king had involved the cabinet. Henry now would gladly have annulled his late proceedings, especially as the examination of her servants had yielded no positive evidence against the queen of Navarre to justify such violence. Catherine wrote to sooth her daughter, and tried to lure her back to Paris; but Marguerite refused to listen to any pacific overture; while the king of Navarre steadily declined to receive back his consort whilst a stain remained on her character. At length it was determined to send Bellièvre[2] to the king of Navarre to assure his majesty that all had resulted from an unfortunate misunderstanding, which the king deeply regretted. The king sent a letter, written with his own hand, in which his majesty, eloquent in his exhortations, tells his brother-in-law that "kings, mon frère, have before this committed errors; and the most virtuous princesses have not been exempt from foul slanders, in witness of which, remember all the libels current respecting that estimable personage the late queen your mother." On reading this epistle the king of Navarre burst into a loud laugh, and, turning to Bellièvre, made a witty retort on the choice nature of the implied epithets applied to his wife and his mother, by which his majesty sought to extricate himself from an unpleasant predicament. Bellièvre further represented that no outrage

[1] D'Aubigné: Hist. Universelle, tome ii. The queen-mother had just returned from La Fère, whither she had conducted the duc d'Anjou from Boulogne.

[2] "Le roy a envoyé Bellièvre au Navarrois pour chanter en son nom la palinodie et raccommoder le mari avec la femme."—Lettre de Busbecq à l'Empereur Rodolphe II., No. 29. MSS. Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, vol. lxxxvii., which contains all the documents relative to this affair, and the negotiation of Bellièvre.

had actually been committed on the person of queen Marguerite; that the king was not obliged to render account of any language he might have used respecting his sister; and that his majesty commanded the king of Navarre to receive back his sovereign's sister, and not to embroil the realm by further contentions, as his majesty acknowledged his error in having deemed the former to be more guilty than she had proved. The king of Navarre, justly offended at the tone of this admonition, replied, "that it was his intention to send M. de Pibrac to treat with the king on this subject; but, meantime, he declined to see or to receive queen Marguerite."

Marguerite during these negotiations had well employed her leisure at Vendôme in her own behalf. So resolute and daring was her spirit, that she actually contrived an ambuscade to waylay the ambassadors of the king of Navarre, d'Aubigné and Duplessis Mornay, on their departure from Lyons, to obtain possession of their letters, instructions, and other documents which might enlighten her as to the nature of the negotiations pending.[1] The king of Navarre, by the merest accident, discovered the design, and despatched a courier to warn the ambassadors against a surprise by the way. Foiled in that project, Marguerite opened a correspondence with Philip II., king of Spain, through the prince of Parma, viceroy of Flanders. Philip, ever on the alert to profit by the troubles of France, had caused propositions to be made to Marguerite that she should remove to La Fère, under pretext of visiting Monsieur, who was lying there dangerously ill, when, by a well-concerted movement, a body of Spanish troops under Farnese should cross the frontier and carry off the queen.[2] When once on Spanish territory, it was shown

[1] Vie de Duplessis Mornay, liv. i. p. 74.

[2] Caillière: Hist. du Maréchal de Matignon, p. 166.

to Marguerite that she could make her own terms with her persecutors; or, if her majesty preferred, Philip bound himself to support her application for a divorce from the king of Navarre to the Holy See. The possibility of her alliance with Philip himself, recently a widower,[1] was the next bribe offered for Marguerite's acceptance. That accomplished, the king of Spain proposed, on the death of Henry III. and his brother, to assert the claim of Marguerite de Valois to the crown of France, in defiance of traditional usage, and his own decision as respected the realm of Portugal—that the rights of the children of individuals who, had they lived, would have claimed royal honours, ought to be preferred before those of the brothers or sisters of their deceased parents; thus overlooking the two infantas his own daughters, and the family of the duc de Lorraine.[2] The brilliant vista of the Spanish crown seems for a time to have dazzled Marguerite, and she eagerly entered into a correspondence with Philip relative to a project so calculated to assuage her resentment and minister to her ambition. This dangerous intrigue, however, came to the knowledge of the wife[3] of the maréchal de Matignon, lieutenant-governor of Guyenne, but by what means has never been ascertained. Madame de Matignon immediately communicated the plot to her husband, by whom it was imparted both to Henry III. and to the king of Navarre. Their mutual interest, therefore, arrested the recriminations of the sovereigns, and, effectually to put an end to so pernicious a design, the king of Navarre at length reluctantly consented to receive his consort. Madame de Matignon was sent to

[1] Anne of Austria, Philip's fourth wife, had died at Badajoz, 1580, of the fatal epidemic of that year.

[2] Children of Elizabeth de Valois and Claude de France, Marguerite's elder sisters.

[3] Françoise de Daillon de Ludé.

visit the queen at Vendôme, and to escort her to Nérac. Henry III. afterwards acknowledged his obligations to this lady for the assistance which she thus rendered. "I thank you," says his majesty in a letter addressed to the maréchal de Matignon,[1] "for the able assistance rendered to us by your wife, whom you sent to visit my sister the queen of Navarre. She indeed effectually exhorted her to perform that which her duty and her loyalty to my crown demanded." Marguerite seems to have been also aware that she owed some gratitude for the intercession made on her behalf by the maréchal de Matignon and his wife. To be again received by the king of Navarre seems, after all, to have been her paramount desire. By the failing health of the duc d'Anjou Marguerite beheld her husband on the point of becoming the heir-presumptive of France: she, therefore, already grasped that august rank, which formed the most tempting allurement offered to her by the diplomacy of Philip of Spain. Accordingly the queen of Navarre accepted her husband's overtures, and consented to live in retirement at Nérac until she could disprove the statements made by the king relative to the marquis de Chanvallon. She also wrote to the maréchal de Matignon to thank him for the aid he had rendered her. Marguerite assumes throughout this letter the lofty tone of a person deeply injured and forgiving, whose long-suffering had been partially rewarded by the tardy overture of reconciliation. She says, "As M. de Clervaux has been to visit me, empowered by the king my husband to bring me assurances of his good-will and favour, and of the resolution which he has at last taken to receive me again, I deem that I have now reason to hope that I shall soon experience relief from the delays which I have hitherto found so painful to endure. One of my chief contentments at the prospect of being soon re-

[1] Hist. du Maréchal de Matignon.

united to my husband, is the desire that I have to see you, monsieur, on good terms with the king, for this is to promote the general welfare, and that of us three in particular. Experience has demonstrated how pernicious is discord between the king my husband and those who hold your present office.[1] The king my husband complains in his despatch of the language used towards him by M. de Bellièvre; while the latter has written to me that the said king has no ground for displeasure. I believe there are those whose minds are solely bent on promoting and coining evil, while I am compelled—unfortunate that I am—to bear the heavy burden! Nevertheless—patience! In good time I trust to obtain from God, aid blessed and heavenly, in measure as I now experience the malicious enmity of man."[2]

[1] The maréchal de Matignon was lieutenant-governor of Guyenne.

[2] Hist. du Maréchal de Matignon. Caillière, vol. iv, fol. p. 166-9, et seq.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

1583—1585.

Changes in the royal household—Displeasure of queen Catherine—The assembly of St. Germain—The cardinal de Bourbon—His character and *liaison* with the princes of Lorraine—Sumptuary laws—Colloquy between queen Louise and madame de Neuilly—Illness of M. d'Anjou—He is visited by queen Catherine—Arrives in Paris—Interview with king Henry—His sojourn at St. Germain—Disputes of the courtiers—Decease of the duc d'Anjou—Details—Letters of condolence addressed to the king—Letter of Henry III. to M. de Villeroy—Ambassage of the duc d'Epernon to the king of Navarre—He refuses to change his religion—Code of etiquette introduced by the king—Henry visits Gaillon—The duc de Guise signs a convention with Spain—Condition of the country—Arrival of deputies from the States of Flanders—They offer the sovereignty of the Netherlands to king Henry—English ambassage—Henry is invested with the Order of the Garter—Proceedings of the duc de Guise—He takes up arms—Commencement of the campaign—Intervention of queen Catherine—Demands of the confederates—The treaty of Nemours.

From Montargis Henry had proceeded to Lyons, to meet the duc de Joyeuse on his return from Rome. The duke's health continued feeble, for the depressing effects of *malaria* fever still clung to him. After giving his royal master a detailed account of his mission, Joyeuse, feeling himself for the present unable to compete with the duc d'Epernon, requested permission to retire for three months from court.

A total change, however, was impending in the manners and discipline of the court. The king, palled by his excesses, and finding delight in nothing, suddenly

declared his resolve to effect a thorough reformation in the state, and to take Louis XII. for his model. His exchequer was empty, nor did his majesty perceive any mode likely to procure its replenishment. His demands for a subsidy had been met with careless disregard by the chambers;[1] while Catherine declared her inability to propose any measures likely to relieve the king's irksome position, and avowed her intent to retire from public life to her palace of the Tuileries. She bitterly reproached her son for the folly of his late proceedings towards his sister; and for the directions he had forwarded to the maréchal de Matignon to resume hostilities in the south, unless the king of Navarre obeyed his command and received back his consort; "as if Monsieur, MM. de Montmorency, and de Lesdiguières will remain passive spectators of the campaign!" The queen next commented on the condition of the court, which was, she said, composed for the most part of needy men, ennobled and enriched at the expense of the state—sycophants, therefore, whose gain was to flatter their royal master, and to maintain the present condition of affairs. "Where, monsieur, are the great nobles—Guise, Montmorency, Nevers, Nemours, and others—noble peers, whose presence conferred dignity and glory on the courts of the kings your father and grandfather?" On the mind of Henry III. when thus stimulated, impulses of rectitude often dawned, and for a brief interval he would act up to these inspirations, though always in an

[1] The king went himself to the chambers to ask for a subsidy. Cheverny, after his majesty had concluded his oration, arose to enter into details. While explaining the varied nature of the king's wants, and the number of gratuities and pensions his majesty conferred, the eyes of the orator rested on the group of chamberlains behind the throne, while his gesture unconsciously gave greater force to the indication. The august senators thereupon so far forgot themselves as to laugh aloud in the very presence of majesty. "*Les sangsues de la cour*" was the popular denomination for the favourites.

exaggerated form. His intellect, however, weakened by sloth and unaccustomed to sustained action, soon relapsed into torpidity, and resigned itself to the direction of the individual, who, to a stirring and enterprizing will, added the highest deference for the sensual passions of his sovereign.

The first phase of Henry's repentance usually demonstrated itself by acts of extravagant devotion. Accordingly his majesty founded at Vincennes several religious houses for monks of the order of St. Geronimo—a brotherhood patronized by the king of Spain; and shortly after his return to Paris he performed a pilgrimage on foot to Notre Dame de Châtres, attended by forty-seven members of the fraternity of Flagellants, to supplicate for the blessing of offspring, and that right inspirations might be vouchsafed him for the government of his kingdom. Henry then took up his abode at St. Germain-en-Laye, as the plague was making fearful ravages in the capital.

The king then convoked a general assembly of princes, nobles, prelates, and deputies, to take into consideration the condition of the realm, and to give his majesty advice thereon. Principally, however, the assembly of St. Germain met to receive the report of the commissioners who had been sent by the king into every province, during the summer, to inquire into the condition and wants of his subjects. The choice of these envoys had been made on the whole judiciously,[1] yet they shamefully betrayed their trust: and yielding to the all-pervading corruption, believed that they should more securely enlist the good-will of their royal master by providing, if possible, for his pecuniary necessities

[1] The principal envoys were Pierre de Villars, archbishop of Vienne, Pierre d'Espinac, archbishop of Lyons, the lords of d'Angennes, de Berre, d'Alain, and Philippe du Bec, bishop of Nantes.

rather than by presenting, on their return, a list of grievances to be redressed. Consequently, after inviting the people to furnish a statement of their condition and wants, they enlarged on the goodness and magnanimity of the sovereign, and exhorted their hearers to contribute towards the replenishment of the treasury by voluntary donations. In some districts the commissioners met with sullen disaffection; in others, their ill-timed laudation of the sovereign was received with hooting and derisive cheers; at no place, however, did they meet with co-operation, or were they aided by an earnest revelation of grievances. The national distrust had grown and become consolidated; nine persons out of every ten in the realm were members of different leagues. The faction of the royalists had nothing to recommend it, more than the other cabals, to the people in general; on the contrary, it had the disadvantage of being the small minority universally assailed and reviled. The reports of these commissioners, on their return to Paris, were nevertheless received as oracular. The assembly at St. Germain was convoked, and they opened the conferences by a detailed account of their several missions. A committee was then appointed to consider each of these statements, a prince of the blood presiding jointly with the commissioner whose report was under examination.[1] The remaining members of the assembly, during the deliberations of their colleagues in committee, spent their time in dissensions on matters of privilege, precedence, and immunity. All kinds of subtle disquisitions were introduced upon matters which, being already determined on the recognised principles

[1] Articles et Propositions lesquels le Roi a voulu être délibérés par les Princes et Officiers de la Couronne, à l'Assemblée de St. Germain, Novembre, 1583. A Paris, 1584, en 12°. Bibl. Imp. MS. Suppl. Fran., fol. 184.

of expediency and usage, admitted of no discussion.[1] The folly of the king encouraged debates on the royal prerogative, and attempts to define in words the prescriptive privileges of the anointed sovereign. The following proposition was submitted to the prelates, despite the protest and remonstrances of Catherine de Medici: "And be it enacted that the king, and his officers of state performing the functions of their office, cannot be subject to papal interdict, nor to excommunication; moreover, the king has a legal right to forbid the publication of such bulls issued against his royal person, or against the bishops and magistrates of the realm." When this clause was laid before the ecclesiastics at St. Germain they refused to discuss the question, on the plea "that they had scruples of conscience which they found it impossible to overcome"—an assertion perfectly to be credited, inasmuch as the majority of these prelates, being members of the League, relied on the spiritual weapons of Rome for ultimate victory. The mooting of this question, nevertheless, was judged to have been highly inexpedient by the most loyal subjects of the throne.

It was during this assembly at St. Germain that the cardinal de Bourbon first demonstrated his adherence to the principles of the League as expounded by the princes of Guise. This prelate was the youngest son of Charles duc de Vendôme and Françoise d'Alençon, and the brother of Antoine king of Navarre and the prince of Condé, slain at Jarnac. The credulity of the cardinal being unbounded, he was calculated to fill to perfection the rôle to be presently offered him by Spain and the house of Lorraine. He implicitly believed the

[1] "Tout ce passa dans cette assemblée en discussions oiseuses, et en discours d'apparat. On y éleva des disputes sur les rangs et les préséances."

assertions of his allies, and demonstrated the most intense veneration for their maxims. The career of the cardinal de Bourbon furnishes no single trait of genius or benevolence. Essentially selfish, he was never trusted by any member of his house; no bond of parentage, alliance, or friendship ever proved strong enough to avert a perfidious betrayal whereby he might himself be profited. He was vain, self-sufficient, and ignorant on most subjects, excepting upon matters concerning the canons of his church, of which he was a diligent student. His little mind rendered him peculiarly liable to fall into the snares of the designing. He loved intrigue, and was an adept in all its most odious resources, such as deceit and equivocation. The instability and weakness of the cardinal's character fortunately neutralized, in some measure, his defects. Consequently, until taken up by the duc de Guise for his own political designs, the cardinal had sunk beneath that negative contempt which always surrounds those individuals who are known to cherish the will to harm their neighbours, if only the power to do so equalled their malice. Throughout his long life the cardinal had been an assiduous courtier; and from the period of the accession of Charles IX. he had devoted himself to queen Catherine. The character of the latter exercised much control over the cardinal. From the mind of Catherine he beheld from time to time his own political ideas spontaneously emanate, matured, however, and lighted by the ray of her rare ability. He dreaded while he rendered homage; hence Catherine's power over one whose nature refused concession except through the baser passions of fear or vanity. It is to be doubted whether the cardinal de Bourbon would ever have had the hardihood of himself to form close alliance with Guise, unless in a manner reassured by a certain amount of assent from the queen. The sole redeeming point

in the character of the cardinal was the sincerity of his devotion to his faith. He was usually courtly in his demeanour, and of very affable address. His large ecclesiastical revenues were spent liberally, rather, however, in pacifying the demands of importunate supplicants than in pursuance of any enlightened scheme of general philanthropy. A character like that of the cardinal de Bourbon, when it succumbs before a bolder and more aspiring intellect, ever remains in tutelage. Louis de Minterne, abbé de Chastrice, confessor to the cardinal, had during many years inspired his patron with distrust as to the proceedings of the duc de Guise, and constantly opposed his political alliance. The abbé died in the year 1581, and was succeeded by André de Rubempré in his post of confidential counsellor to the cardinal. Rubempré was a secret though ardent partisan of the League. He perpetually descanted in the presence of his patron on the miserable condition of the realm, the profligacy and favouritism of the court, the all but national bankruptcy, and on the prospect of the ruin of the church when the heretic Henri of Navarre became heir-presumptive of France. It was, therefore, represented to the cardinal that his duty as a faithful son of the church, and as a Frenchman, imperatively demanded that he should assert his prior right to the crown of France. A pamphlet, written in Latin, was published and circulated over the realm, in which the rights of the cardinal de Bourbon were demonstrated and compared with those of his nephew to the disadvantage of the latter; the most extravagant paradox being used to demonstrate the axiom that a collateral descent gave a prior claim to succession before that of the lineal representative of a race.[1] The credulous old

[1] De la Succession du Droit de Prérogative de premier Prince du Sang deferée à M. le Cardinal de Bourbon, traduit du Latin de Mathieu Zampini. Paris, 1589.

prelate read and approved—believed himself called by Heaven to interpose his orthodox claims for the rescue of the church and the crown—and allowed his name to become the ostensible *cri de guerre* of the Lorraine faction.

The deportment of the hitherto suasive cardinal at the assembly of St. Germain was, therefore, a source of intense astonishment to the uninitiated. He several times attempted to address the assemblage upon points of doctrine and the reformation of abuses, but losing the thread of his discourse, he was compelled abruptly to resume his seat. One day, in the presence of the king, the attorney-general du Guesle eloquently expatiated on the corrupt practices of the various criminal courts of the realm, and especially censured the abuse of the right of sanctuary possessed by the shrine of St. Romain of Rouen. The cardinal de Bourbon, in the midst of the oration, rose in a fury from his seat[1] and threw himself at the foot of the throne, praying that du Guesle might be degraded for his heresy, and compelled to make *amende honorable* for his flagrant insult to the chapter and clergy of the diocese of Rouen. The clamour made by the cardinal roused the king from the state of dreamy indifference with which he had been listening to the harangues, and with a gesture of surprise his majesty hastened to pacify his irate kinsman by the assurance that his demand should be considered.[2] The cardinal de Guise, younger brother of the duc de Guise, having presumed to dispute precedence with Charles de Bourbon, archbishop coadjutor of Rouen, on the plea that a cardinal priest ought to take precedence above a prince of the blood, if of lower ecclesiastical rank, the cardinal

[1] "Le cardinal," says de Thou, "entra en fureur et se jetta aux genoux du roi avec autant d'empressement qui s'il s'étoit agi de la dignité, de ses biens, et de son salut."

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps, liv. lxxviii.

de Bourbon was infatuated enough to support these pretensions. The king, however, decided that a prince of the blood took precedence over every subject, lay or ecclesiastical, which fiat so offended the cardinal de Guise that he retired from the assembly. Some prelates followed Guise in his retreat; others deferred to the decision of the king, and took their places below the youthful archbishop, who was, however, owing to the negotiations of Joyeuse in Rome, a cardinal elect. "Verily, some men do honour to the purple, others derive from it their sole distinction!" was the indignant speech made by the cardinal de Bourbon, as he swept past the bench of bishops on the first session of the assembly, after the departure of monseigneur de Guise.[1]

The momentous business upon which the assembly had been convoked, meanwhile, made little progress. Ample discourses were read, and schemes of reformation suggested; but as all the members were intent on their own interests, and in fighting for the maintenance of the privileges of their respective orders, the condition of the miserable and oppressed people, decimated by civil wars and impoverished by taxation, had little chance of amelioration. A law was enacted against usurers, and the king issued an edict proscribing "all leagues, associations, societies, and confederations."

The king, during the session of the assembly, continued to employ himself busily on the reformation of his household. He also published several edicts tending to promote the domestic prosperity of his people. Amongst other mandates were some severe sumptuary laws regulating the attire of the ladies of his realm. The extravagance in dress had reached a frightful climax, for the wives of burghers, it was stated, arrayed themselves in the habiliments deemed suitable for a countess in the reign of Francis I. Gold embroi-

[1] De Thou.

dcrics, silk, velvet, and satins, were forbidden, under penalties of severe fines, to all women below the rank of a president's wife. The king condescended to enter into minute details as to what he deemed to be a sufficient wardrobe for the different classes of his female lieges. The edict was received with angry defiance; but as the king was then in no humour to be disobeyed, he sent his provost la Perreuse commands to proceed rigorously against all infractors of the new laws. The consequence was, that some fifty or sixty ladies were summarily arrested and conveyed from their homes to the prison of Fort l'Evêque, all offers to bail the fair prisoners being sternly rejected. This rigorous measure created great discontent; and the streets adjacent to the prison were crowded by the populace, whose remarks and gibes on the splendid raiment of the king and his minions more than avenged the captive dames. The following morning Henry arrived in Paris in person, and proceeding to the gaol, himself liberated the ladies and paid their prison fees. They were courteously dismissed by his majesty with a suitable reprimand; but after some further attempt to enforce the observance of the edict, its evasion was tacitly connived at.[1]

Some few weeks after this occurrence, queen Louise, attended by one lady, went to make purchases at the shop of a celebrated vender of silk brocades in the Rue St. Denis. A lady sumptuously attired stood before a counter examining pieces of silk, who, on the entrance of the queen, continued her survey without offering any act of deferential homage to her majesty, whose arrival, in fact, she appeared not to have observed. The queen remembered the sumptuary laws recently enacted, and glanced at the superb habiliments of the lady, whom

[1] Mém. de l'Etoile. Lettres de Busbecq, No. 29. Droux de Radier: Hist. des Reynes and Régentes de France.

she had never seen at the Louvre. Louise, therefore, asked her who she was. The lady, still absorbed by her occupation, replied carelessly, "that out of pity for her ignorance she was willing to inform her that she was addressing madame la présidente de Neuilly!" "Truly, madame," retorted the queen, severely, "your attire then seems unsuitable to your condition." "At any rate, that is nothing to you, *ma bonne femme*, since you do not find the money to pay for my said attire," replied madame la présidente, in a voice of haughty insolence. She was proceeding to add more in the same strain, when the silk-mercer approached, and whispered in her ear the magical words, "sa majesté la reyne!" Madame de Neuilly then turned for the first time towards the queen, and recognizing her royal mistress, she threw herself at the feet of Louise and implored her to pardon the rudeness of her speech, and her apparent wilful omission of the respectful homage due to her majesty. Louise reassured her supplicant, promising to overlook her involuntary want of deference to the queen; but, at the same time, she gravely admonished madame la présidente to show less arrogance in her address, and carefully to adjust her attire within the limits prescribed by the recent edict.[1]

The zeal of the king, even when commendably roused, was never tempered by prudence. The reductions in his household were made without corresponding compensation to the servants summarily dismissed, many of whom had spent large sums in the purchase of their appointments. Thus, the king had one hundred and fifty inferior officers of his chamber—persons whose salaries were lucrative, and their posts almost a sinecure. At one stroke of the pen Henry reduced the number of these officers to twenty-four, and dis-

[1] Mallot: Economie Spirituelle et Temporelle des Grands, p. 595.

missed the remainder. In all departments of the royal household the same scrutiny was instituted; many offices were totally abolished, in others the number of retainers was decreased to one-half. The officers on the royal domains were next passed in review; numerous abuses were detected and punished; and many ancient servants of the royal hunting and hawking establishments harshly cashiered for indirect participation in practices which their royal master, in somewhat unwonted language, now designated as frauds. The number of individuals thus dismissed amounted to several hundreds, and the greater part of them before the end of the year 1585 were found enrolled under the banner of the League.

During these transactions, the health of the duc d'Anjou was rapidly declining. The fatigue and excitement of his Flemish campaign had made deadly inroad on a constitution always feeble. His disgraceful repulse by the people of Antwerp, and the final rejection of his matrimonial overtures by queen Elizabeth, sank deeply into the heart of the duke. At Dunkirk Monsieur had ruptured a vessel on the lungs, and while still confined to his bed, the repose of his sick chamber was invaded by the news of the approach of the prince of Parma to invest that city. Before the duke was in a condition to travel he was, therefore, compelled to quit Dunkirk and embark for Boulogne, from whence he journeyed to La Fére with queen Catherine. The failing health of the duke had the natural effect of diminishing his energy and desire for conquest. The resentment of the people of Antwerp for his enterprize against their liberties was still uncontrollable; and had even redounded on the prince of Orange, whose loss of popularity was followed by his retirement from Antwerp to Flushing, after the convention of the States to meet

at Middelbourg. The people of Ghent, hostile to the rule of the Spaniards, yet jealously refusing to admit French troops within their territory, still further complicated affairs. The duke of Parma, therefore, after the capture of Dunkirk, menaced Ostend, and invested Ipres, which soon capitulated. Town after town surrendered to the Spaniards in Flanders; Ghent, Bruges, and Ostend offered submission to the viceroy. Antwerp, Brussels, Ecluse, and Malines alone stubbornly refused to recant, and receive a Spanish garrison with such conditions as the conqueror chose to dictate. This almost universal retrogression did not comprehend the Dutch provinces, which proudly maintained their independence. Cambray, moreover, repulsed every attempt to reduce it; and Balagny and the French garrison bravely sustained the *prestige* of their countrymen. The duc d'Anjou bitterly reproached his royal brother for this condition of affairs; and commented on the weakness of the king, who while he lavished thousands upon unworthy favourites, suffered the fame of his only brother to be thus obscured.

All political considerations, however, were suspended for the moment by Monsieur's illness. Catherine again departed from Paris to visit the duke at Château Thierry, whither he had retired, and to induce him to return with her to Paris. She found Monsieur reduced almost to the last extremity of weakness—bodily as well as mental. He wept while lamenting his impending fate, and besought her majesty to pardon the disquietudes which his conduct might have occasioned her. He could not, however, be persuaded to visit Paris; and declared that he held the king his brother to be responsible for his untimely end, by the little interest he had taken in forwarding his projects on the Low Countries, and his matrimonial negotiations to obtain

the hand of the queen of England.[1] The varied misfortunes of the past years so weighed upon the mind of Catherine, that on her return to Paris she fell dangerously ill of fever. The king ridiculed the assertion that his mother's malady was occasioned by mental anxiety, and declared that the fever was rather caused by the proximity of one of the great sewers of Paris to her abode, the hôtel de Soissons. Catherine's illness showing no signs of speedy abatement, the duc d'Anjou suddenly quitted Château Thierry, and arrived at his mother's abode. The sight of her son proved a great solace to Catherine; and at length, at her urgent entreaty, he consented to be reconciled to the king his brother. The duke accordingly repaired to St. Germain. Henry showed much emotion on beholding the shrunken features of his brother, and his bent and attenuated figure, and repeatedly exclaimed, "that he could never have believed such a transformation possible in so brief a period." Monsieur, likewise, was much affected; he prayed his brother to forgive him all that he had done against his throne and person. "Mon frère," exclaimed the king, "we will not use the word pardon. It is true we have differed in opinion, but the queen our mother shall decide which of us two held the right."[2] The king then affectionately prayed his brother to take up his abode with him for a period at St. Germain. Unfortunately the duke agreed, and a temporary improvement in his health just then occurring, he was persuaded to accompany the king in his accustomed wild foray through the streets of Paris during the carnival of the year 1584. "On the eve of

[1] Abrégé de la Vie de François Duc d'Alençon, par Marin le Roy, Sieur de Gomberville. This history is to be found in the second volume of the Mém. de Nevers.

[2] Lettre de Busbecq, Ambassadeur impériale, à Rodolphe II.: Lettre 32.

Shrove Tuesday," says l'Estoile, "the king and his brother, followed by their minions and favourites, went through the streets of Paris in masquerade, disguised as merchants, priests, and advocates. They were mounted on horseback, and rode furiously, running over people, and beating many whom they met, especially such persons as wore masks, for the king wished to reserve this privilege for himself. They then proceeded to the Foire de St. Germain, where they stayed committing numberless insolences until ten o'clock on the following morning, when they retired." The effects of this night of debauch were severely felt by the unfortunate duke. He was afterwards confined to his bed for several weeks at St. Germain, and rose to return to Château Thierry, where he alone believed himself to be in safety.[1]

On the 13th of March the duke's malady assumed so serious an aspect that he was thought to be dying, and an express was despatched to Paris to summon the queen-mother. Monsieur, however, again rallied, though he never afterwards left his bed.

In Paris the extremity to which the duc d'Anjou was reduced created no sympathy. His conduct had alienated the affections of the people; while the partisans of the League rejoiced that a dispensation of Providence was about to remove a prince whose claims, as heir presumptive, insuperably interfered with their designs. There were those even unpatriotic enough to rejoice that the king of Spain would be rid of so obnoxious a rival; and that the queen of England was losing an ally, whose designs on the Low Countries she, on more than one occasion, had dexterously inter-

[1] Two assassins were arrested in the apartments of the duke armed with poniards. While undergoing the torture, they declared that their intended victim was M. de Fervaques, whose life they sought at the instigation of a personage whom he had injured.

posed to ward from her realm the revolutionary enterprises of Philip II. The duc de Guise and the Spanish ambassador, don Bernard Mendoza, were frequently engaged in private discussion during the interval which elapsed between the period when Monsieur quitted Paris and his demise. "I have received certain news from Château Thierry that the condition of M. d'Anjou gets worse every day," said the duc de Guise to his mother madame de Nemours, while sitting at the foot of her bed one afternoon during a temporary indisposition with which the duchess had been assailed. "Madame, I have resolved on my course—*Je m'en vais faire les doux yeux à M. le cardinal de Bourbon!* The queen-mother, according to her old fashion, will join the strongest side. The king of Navarre is at too great a distance to hinder our projects; we shall, therefore, be indispensable to that said little *bon homme*,[1] and we will take good heed not to lose Paris!"[2] To his mother, to madame de Montpensier, and to the duc de Mercœur, Guise alone confided his precise projects at this period. The duc de Mayenne was as yet a faithful servant of the crown; and preferred the peaceable possession of his wealth and honours to the pursuit of any chimerical schemes of ambition. The cardinal de Guise was arrogant and boastful; besides, the licence of his life precluded the hope that any important secret confided to his keeping would not transpire. The perfidy of the duc de Mercœur, however, was signal. The brother of queen Louise, he had been raised from the inferior condition of a poor cadet of Lorraine to an equality with his sovereign; he had been enriched by the misplaced bounty of his brother-in-law, who besides bestowed upon him in marriage the heiress of the elder branch of Luxembourg. A trivial quarrel with king Henry

[1] Mathieu: Hist. du Régne de Henri III., p. 491.
[2] Lettre de Busbecq à l'Empéreur Rodolphe II., No. 37.

was the immediate cause of the duke's desertion. The duke de Mercœur had been created governor of Bretagne, while the duc de Joyeuse received the appointment of high-admiral. Mercœur, in his capacity of governor, claimed the disposal of all vacant naval appointments in the ports of Brétagne, a right which the duc de Joyeuse disputed in the exercise of his functions as admiral of France. The queen supported her brother, and warmly blamed the conduct of Joyeuse. His majesty, however, decided in favour of the claim of the duc de Joyeuse, in consequence of which a long wrangle commenced, which ended in the temporary alienation of the royal pair and the defection of Mercœur from the royal cause.

To queen Catherine, meanwhile, the duc de Guise explained in confidence that the elevation of a puppet, in the person of the cardinal de Bourbon, was a necessary evil, if her majesty intended to bar the throne to a heretic pretender. That the French nation was not altogether prepared to witness the overthrow of the dynasty of St. Louis; and that such a measure, by familiarizing the mind of the people to the exclusion of the king of Navarre, would prepare the way for the legal adoption of her grandson, the eldest son of the duc de Lorraine, by the king, and for its eventual ratification by a papal mandate. To his sister the duchesse de Montpensier, Guise ridiculed the credulity of the queen-mother. "The leg is further from the nose than the knee; therefore, I deem myself justified in preparing our own aggrandizement, rather than for that of MM. our cousins of Lorraine," observed the duc de Guise, jestingly. To Mendoza the Spanish ambassador, the duke was compelled to be more explicit. That wary diplomatist, who had just been ignominiously dismissed by queen Elizabeth from London for tampering in the plots which eventually brought Mary Stuart to the

block, was not to be deceived by a jest, or by a *bravade*. The siege of Antwerp, the preponderance of Catholic arms in the Low Countries, the perdition of Elizabeth of England, and the institution of the chambers of the Holy Office in France, were facts and projects daily and exultingly contemplated by the ambassador. Moreover, a deputation from the States of Middelbourg was known to be on its way to seek reconciliation with the duc d'Anjou; or if that unfortunate prince should be no more, the despatch of an illustrious ambassage was in contemplation, to lay the sovereignty of the Low Countries and Holland at the feet of the king of France. The duke represented to Mendoza, "that if he appeared to intrigue for the elevation of the cardinal, it was not from any intention of succeeding in such design; neither need his Catholic majesty believe him capable of so paltry a meanness as to depose the reigning family, to elevate the princes of Lorraine, his cousins, as he tried to persuade the queen-mother; but that the phantom of the cardinal king was necessary to set his designs afloat."[1] It does not, however, appear that the duc de Guise was guilty at this period of conspiracy against the person of Henry III. His aim was to substitute his own house as next in succession, before the heretic though rightful branch of Bourbon Albret.

The decease of the duc d'Anjou, which was to give life and reality to many of these speculations, was fast approaching. At the latter end of the month of May, 1584, Catherine once more repaired to visit her son, and remained three days at Château Thierry.[2] At her son's request she took charge of his will, and promised

[1] De Thou.

[2] "Le duc d'Anjou a été à l'extremité à Château Thierry, on a même publié qu'il étoit empoisonné, mais on dit maintenant qu'il est mieux. Quelques-uns croient qu'il a les poumons gâtés à cause d'un grand vomissement de sang. La rèine mère est allé le voir, et a resté auprès de lui."—Lettres de Busbecq, No. 33. Paris, 24 Mai, 1584.

to insure its faithful execution. The duke also gave all his jewels and orders into his mother's keeping, and commanded that his most valuable furniture at Château Thierry and at Angers should be sent to her palace in Paris. Monsieur lingered about a week after the queen's departure. His death was sudden, and resulted from the rupture of a second blood-vessel, after a violent fit of coughing brought on by the lodgment of a crumb of bread in his throat. The duke communicated and received the last sacraments of the church with humility and devotion. His sufferings were intense; but the final hours of his troublous life were comparatively free from pain.[1] Monsieur was sincerely lamented by the officers of his household, to whom he had always been an indulgent though an injudicious master. They wept round his dying pillow, and assiduously attended him during his last conflict.[2] His confessor Jacques Berson, subsequently drew up a narrative of the closing scenes of his master's life—a touching chronicle, if only certain previous passages in the duke's career could be obliterated from the memory, so as to invest, with even a semblance of probability, the rapturous laudations of the writer.

"M. d'Anjou is just now dead," writes the imperial ambassador Busbecq.[3] "He was a prince who never knew how to avoid the evil counsels of dishonest ministers; nor could he discern a true friend from a flatterer. He was inconsistent, restless, volatile, and always ready to disturb the public tranquillity. The queen his mother is vehemently afflicted at his decease; the others appear to be so, but their grief is insincere. The king has just clothed himself from head to foot in

[1] Regret Funèbre, contenant les actions et derniers paroles de Monseigneur Fils de France. Par Jacques Berson, Prédicateur de feu Monseigneur. A Paris, 1584.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. No. 8824, fol. 90.—Lettre de M. de Nouville à M. de Matignon.

[3] Lettre 28.

black robes, discarding the usual royal mourning of violet." "The duc d'Anjou," says M. de Thou, "was a prince of restless disposition, lively, affable, magnanimous, eloquent, magnificent, ambitious, and volatile. France twice owed the conclusion of peace to his mediation, and his death precipitated the country into the most disastrous and deplorable troubles." By his will the duke bequeathed his rights in the Low Countries to his brother king Henry. He especially commended the people of Cambray to the protection and good offices of the king; and in a separate codicil he implored his majesty to pardon all the enterprises of which he had been guilty. He desired that his debts might be paid, and requested to be buried as duc de Brabant, a desire which Henry deemed it prudent, with the consent of the queen-mother, to disregard. He also for the same reasons declined to accept the title of Protector of the town of Cambray; but as Catherine still maintained her claims to the crown of Portugal against Philip II., his majesty permitted his mother to take possession of Cambray as a guarantee for the future satisfaction of her demands. His jewels, money, and rich personalty, Monsieur left to his mother.[1]

The body of the duc d'Anjou was embalmed and transported to Paris, where it was deposited in state before the high altar in the church of St. Magloire. On the twenty-fourth day of June the king, arrayed in a long mourning mantle and attended by a sumptuous train, proceeded to sprinkle the bier with holy water. Queen Louise also performed the same pilgrimage with her ladies.[2] Catherine was too ill to take part in the ceremonial. She had been doomed to lament the pre-

[1] Mém. de Nevers. Mathieu: Hist. de Henri III., liv. vii. De Thou: Journal de Henri III. Testament de François de Valois, Duc d'Anjou, d'Alençon, et de Brabant.

[2] De Marle: L'Ordre observé à l'enterrement de François de Valois,

mature decease of four of her children. With exceeding anguish the queen now, moreover, mourned the incapacity of her favourite son, the reigning king; while she beheld no resource but an alliance with Guise to overthrow the legitimate pretensions as heir-presumptive of her detested son-in-law, the king of Navarre. The following day, June 25th, the funeral *cortége* proceeded to Notre Dame. The king surveyed the pageant standing bareheaded at a window of a house close to the hôtel Dieu. He was attended by the duc de Guise, with whom his majesty held most mournful converse, his sorrow being outwardly reciprocated by the duke, who is reported to have looked exceedingly melancholy. The procession proceeded on the fourth day of July to St. Denis, where the ceremony of the duke's interment in La Chapelle de Valois was performed with great pomp.[1] Renaud de Baune, archbishop of Bourges, preached the funeral oration; in which, however, he made no allusion to the campaigns of the duke in the Netherlands, such reserve having been deemed expedient by the privy council. "Few princes," says a contemporary writer, "made such extensive conquests in so short a period as M. d'Anjou, though not by arms. It would consume the best part of a hundred years to conquer the territory which at one time acknowledged his rule; that is to say, Holland, Zealand, Friesland, West Friesland, Brabant, Flanders, and Hainault; there only remained for him to subdue the provinces of Franche-Comté and Luxembourg. The evil counsel which some gave the said duke to seize and sack the town of Antwerp was the cause of his ruin." Henry pretended to be so overwhelmed with sorrow for his brother's loss as to be unable to write

frère unique du Roy. This ceremonial is printed (Godefroy: Grand Cérém.) in the edition published in the year 1619 alone.

[1] Ibid.

the intelligence to the king and queen of Navarre.[1] He therefore confided this task to M. de Bellièvre and to the duc de Montpensier. The latter addressed Marguerite: her letter of acknowledgment is written in a spirit of extreme sadness. The decease of Monsieur left her without a protector on whose regard she could rely. The letter is dated from Nérac, where Marguerite still held her solitary state at bitter variance with the king her husband. "I try to submit and to humble myself in the presence of this woful sorrow," wrote the queen of Navarre, "though I cannot yet feel resignation; for despite the consolations which you offer me by your letter, human nature shrinks beneath this cruel and most lamentable visitation."[2]

The prince of Orange wrote also to queen Catherine to condole with the royal family of France in their affliction. His letter is dated from the town of Delft, and was written only a little more than a fortnight before his own assassination. After eulogizing the qualities which distinguished the duc d'Anjou, the prince implores the intervention of the king in the affairs of the Low Countries; "for, madame, our only refuge is in the majesty of God and of the king to arrest the progress of our persecutors."[3] The prince did not exaggerate the extremity of the Netherlanders. All Flanders, excepting the towns of Alost, Antwerp, Brussels, and Cambray, had fallen again a prey to the Spaniards; the latter was garrisoned by Montluc, sieur de Balagny;[4] and Antwerp, straitly invested by the duke

[1] "La douleur que sa mâjesté en recoit ne lui permet pas d'écrire au roi de Navarre."—MS. Bibl. Imp.: Lettre de M. de Neuville à M. de Matignon.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8829, fol. 13: La Reyne de Navarre à M. de Montpensier.

[3] MS. Bibl. Imp. Colbert 337, fol. 203: Guillaume de Nassau, Prince d'Orange, à la Reyne Mère.

[4] The sieur de Balagny, the valiant defender of Cambray, was the

of Parma, was organizing one of the most obstinate and glorious defences on record. Fines, imprisonment, and banishment, were the penalties which awaited those of Philip's Flemish subjects who made submission; the towns were mulcted, and citadels constructed and paid for by public contributions. The duke of Parma, moreover, took the opportunity, while offering his condolences on the demise of Monsieur, to remind the king of the protestations he had so often made, "that his brother was responsible for his own enterprises, never thinking fit to consult with him on any matter." The duke's observations on the decease of his late opponent are somewhat curious. He writes:—

THE PRINCE OF PARMA TO HENRY III. KING OF FRANCE.

Sire,—I cannot refrain from notifying to your majesty the extreme regret that I feel for the decease of Monseigneur the duc d'Anjou, to whom may God Almighty accord pardon. I grieve, not only on account of the nearness of kin between your majesty and him who is no more, but also because I feel the greatest respect and devotion towards your crown. Believe, therefore, sire, that I have sincerely sorrowed the loss of Monsieur your only brother; nevertheless, I doubt not that your majesty has received this affliction with the resignation which we ought to demonstrate when smitten by the almighty hand of God.

Sire, at the present moment it is also my imperative duty, holding the place and position I do, to entreat you very earnestly, in the name of the Catholic king my lord, to act conformably to the assurances which your majesty has often given me, "that you could neither prevent nor interfere with the enterprises of the said deceased duke, nor yet had the deeds of Monseigneur your sanction," to take the present opportunity to manifest your said disapproval and good-will, by commanding the restoration of the town and citadel of Cambray. In doing this your majesty will avert the misery and calamities which now afflict us, and confirm the happy and fraternal alliance which ought to exist between

illegitimate son of Montluc, bishop of Valence, by an English lady of the name of Anne Martin.

your majesties of Spain and France, the grandest monarchs of Christendom!

Juan Baptista de Taxis, his Catholic majesty's envoy at your court, will confer with your majesty on this affair. I implore your majesty to grant the said de Taxis audience, and that soon I may experience the gracious effects of your loyal intentions towards my sovereign.

I pray the Almighty Creator to bestow upon your majesty a long and prosperous life.

From Tournay the 18th day of June, 1584.

From your humble servant,

ALEXANDRO.[1]

Instead, however, of "showing the gracious effects of his loyal intentions towards the king of Spain," Henry had permitted the sovereignty of Catherine de Medici to be proclaimed in Cambray. Balagny, the governor, wrote to assure the queen that "the troops under his command were prepared to receive and observe with heart and soul any mandates which her majesty their sovereign lady and mistress might be pleased to forward, nor would they shrink from shedding the last drop of blood in maintaining her behests."[2] Catherine had despatched Choisnin, the able secretary of legation whom she had formerly sent with the bishop of Valence into Poland to procure Henry's election to that throne, to witness the acceptance of an oath of fidelity to her protectorate by the clergy, municipality, and garrison of Cambray. Henry, therefore, wrote to the duke of Parma, to explain on what causes Cambray had been retained, "until such time as his Catholic majesty should see fit to acknowledge the claims of queen Catherine on the crown of Portugal, or to make suitable compensation." The duke, however, was keenly alive to the shallow artifice adopted by the king.

[1] Lettre du Prince de Parme au Roi Henry III. MS. Bibl. Imp. Colbert 337, fol. 193.

[2] Lettre de M. de Montluc (Balagny), Commandant à Cambray à la Reine Catherine de Medici. Bibl. Imp. MS. Colbert, 337, fol. 179.

In addition, also, to the refusal of the French council to restore Cambray, the mission of two notable embassies, then on their way to Paris, occasioned the king of Spain and his general most vivid anxiety. The States of Holland had accredited a noble ambassage to offer their allegiance to Henry III.; and queen Elizabeth commissioned Henry Stanley, Lord Derby, to carry the Order of the Garter to the king of France, and to exhort his majesty to give favourable hearing to the Flemish deputies—though in reality nothing was further from Elizabeth's desire than that Henry should concede to her solicitations.

As soon as the obsequies of the duc d'Anjou were celebrated, the king experienced great annoyance from personages formerly appertaining to the household of the deceased, who made application for compensation or for admission into the royal service. These petitions were deemed by Henry highly vexatious and irregular. At an immense expense of time and resolution, his majesty had succeeded in diminishing the royal establishments, and the importunity of these petitioners greatly angered him. A private and very curious letter, addressed by Henry to Villeroy on this and other subjects, is still extant. This document, which admirably demonstrates the sarcastic and querulous style of Henry's usual communications to his ministers, is as follows:—

HENRY III. TO M. DE VILLEROY, SECRETARY OF STATE.

Villeroy,—By great good fortune I contrived to escape from the clutches of M. de Biron[1] and his importunate cohort, now useless as regards my service. Thank God! I know how to evade such importunities better than the queen my mother! You

[1] The maréchal de Biron had been compelled to withdraw from Flanders before the victorious arms of Farnese.

will, however, make M. le maréchal understand that as he fills no longer any office in the state I can dispense with his counsels. Also you will inform Quinte,[1] that he had better not present himself again before me, as I have conferred upon him favour enough by allowing him to exist, in return for the good and agreeable services which in former times he has rendered me. It will be also expedient to hint to the queen my mother that the journey to court of such personages is neither necessary nor agreeable. I have also been informed that M. d'Avrilly[2] wishes to exchange his abbey; such permutation may not be to his benefit, for it is not my intention to consort with a person who demeans himself as a valet of valets. Therefore this said d'Avrilly will do well to depart and hold his dignity and rank at a distance from my court. It will then give me satisfaction to befriend him, which you will intimate to his friends and his petty satellites, such as Sellincourt and others. These said people will find themselves mistaken if they seek promotion from me; for Château Thierry and my court are, thank God, dissimilar in most respects. M. de Fay has also asked me to bestow upon him some post in my household, and his mother joined earnestly in this petition. I replied that I would consider the request. You will, however, cause it to be privately intimated to this said de Fay, that his petition cannot be granted; for, as I have already told you, at Château Thierry offices were bestowed as I will not give them. I have also resolved that my household shall not be augmented by a single individual of these said personages. I have faithful followers of my own to recompense, and more than enough.

Send me the enactments, now in the hands of the president Brisson, which I signed at St. Firmin, for the better ordering of my household; also, any rules issued by me at other periods. I should wish to have these documents by Wednesday next, or by Thursday at latest.

Whilst I was occupied in writing this letter to you, your packet arrived; and in which I have read the amiable advice proposed by M. de Savoye to alienate my regard from M. d'Epernon.[3] M. de Savoye trusts to do it by this marriage which he proposes for Epernon; and truly whoever shall seek or obtain that alliance would lose my friendship. M. d'Epernon is too prudent to be thus cajoled, and will deem it more to his interest to become the brother-in-law of his sovereign than the object of my hate; for

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[1] One of the deceased duke's late valets-de-chambre.

[2] A gentleman of the chamber to Monsieur.

[3] The duke of Savoy proposed a marriage between the duc d'Epernon and Catherine de Bourbon, sister of the king of Navarre.

truly, such an event would surely provoke my indignation. Nevertheless, when M. d'Epernon hears of this fine project, I am much mistaken if he does not treat it with derision.

The queen my mother has written to me that the envoys of the States of Flanders have arrived at Rouen. I believe that this negotiation requires the utmost dexterity and tact, and that the queen possesses the requisite prudence to conduct it; but it is also my belief, that however cautiously treated, this negotiation will cost us dear. The main point is to retain possession of Cambray.

You will answer me on all the above points. Meantime, I am disquieted at not having received despatches from Guyenne. When you have intelligence, transmit it to me without delay. Adieu.

HENRY.[1]

The king sternly acted up to his assertions, and not one individual of the duc d'Anjou's late riotous household obtained preferment at court. The most salutary change seems at this period to have taken place in the king's habits; he became energetic, and, to a certain degree, industrious. He intimated his royal pleasure on affairs of state, and adhered to such resolve. The duc de Joyeuse still remained at his country house, gradually recovering from his attack of fever. The duc d'Epernon was also absent on a secret mission, the object of which was to see the king of Navarre, to expose to him, as heir-presumptive, the perils of the realm, and to convey the earnest entreaty of the king that he would now conform to the orthodox faith. The reason publicly assigned for the journey of the duke into Guyenne, was his desire to visit his mother, madame de la Valette,[2] whom he had never seen since his extraordinary elevation. The duc d'Epernon received the most cordial and complimentary greeting from the king of Navarre,

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8388, fol. 1 2.

[2] Jeanne de Lary Bellegarde, sister of the deceased maréchal de Bellegarde. The duc d'Epernon travelled with most pompous equipage. He was attended by a hundred gentlemen, to each of whom Henry presented a gratuity of from 100 to 300 crowns for his equipment.

to whom he imparted the royal message, and invited him, in the name of king Henry, to repair to court and assume his proper position in the councils of the realm. This overture on the part of the king was one of consummate policy; for had the king of Navarre then consented to apostatize, the intrigues of the duc de Guise must have been neutralized, for no flaw could have marred the title of the former to the succession. As it was, the king of Navarre hesitated greatly as to the answer he should return to the proposal that he should conform to the established faith; and he summoned his faithful servant Roquelaure, and a Protestant divine named Marmet, to argue the question in his own presence, and that of Epernon and the chancellor du Ferrier. Nothing was decided by the conference, but Henri at length consented to visit the court, if agreeable to the king, but declined to change his faith.[1] Had the recantation of the king of Navarre been made at this critical period, instead of ten years later, what woes and devastation might not have been spared to France!

When the destination of the duc d'Epernon was ascertained, the rumour was circulated that the object of his journey into Guyenne was to make suit for the hand of Catherine de Bourbon. The duc de Savoye, therefore, officiously wrote to tender his good offices, as the near relative of the princess, in promoting this marriage, an interference which drew from the king the wrathful comment in his letter to Villeroy. Catherine de Bourbon was a Huguenot, and whatever his subjects chose to assert to the contrary, Henry always as cordially detested "the heretics" as when the blood of Coligny flowed at his command.

[1] D'Aubigné. On this occasion, the comte de la Rochefoucauld being present, exclaimed: "MM. les ministres, I only wish that some one would offer you in one hand the crown of France, and in the other a few psalms. I wonder which you would choose?"

Henry, meanwhile, steadily continued his reforms during the absence of Epernon. Catherine retired to Chinon to recover her health, which had suffered from her recent bereavement. Queen Louise, on bad terms [1] with the king her husband, lived in solitary state at Olinville, performing perpetual penances of fasts and other austerities. The king thus separated from his accustomed counsellors, solicited the aid of the countess of Stafford, the English ambassadress, to advise him on the promulgation of his grand edict for the reformation and better ordering of the royal household.[2] The countess at his majesty's request gave a minute detail of the ceremonial used at the court of queen Elizabeth —regulations which the king caused to be taken down on parchment and incorporated in his new code. The first clause of this code prohibited the use of profane language at court. Reserves, expectancies, and coadjutorships were next forbidden in secular and ecclesiastical offices, "as," said his majesty, "they serve to excite an unchristian desire for the demise of parties, present holders of the benefice or office." The king next limits pecuniary gratuities to a certain rate, which his majesty avows his resolve not to exceed. He forbids any personages to solicit favours for others, reserving the privilege alone for the queens Catherine and Louise. Then follow voluminous details as to the etiquette to be henceforth observed at court. There are rules for the most trivial action that could possibly occur within the enchanted purlieus of the Louvre. The mode in which the king was for the future to be served is carefully stated; for instance, two long clauses are devoted to

[1] "Le roy est en froideur avec la reyne sa femme; c'est c'que fait soupçonner que le roy médite de répudier la reyne, sous pretexte qu'elle est stériie, et que pour le bien du royaume il est nécessaire qu'il ait une femme qui lui donna des héritiers."—Lettre 37 de Busbecq à l'Empereur Rodolphe II.

[2] De Thou: Hist. de son Temps.

the ceremonies to be observed when presenting a glass of cold water to his majesty on awaking in the morning, while the distance within which each gentleman might approach the royal *sanctum* is defined according to their respective ranks. All the prohibitions, however, are annulled as regarded the ducs de Joyeuse and Epernon, who, to the great indignation of the nobles of the realm, were placed in the same category as the princes of the blood.[1] The king then reformed the etiquette observed at the council of state. He limited the number of privy councillors to fifty-seven lay members, and a staff of six clerks and six advocates. From the 1st day of October to the 1st of May, the peers were to present themselves at the council arrayed in robes of violet velvet, and the prelates in cloaks of crimson velvet; during the summer season, satin was to be substituted for velvet. The publication of these enactments, which was delayed until New Year's day, 1585, gave great offence, and caused many murmurs. The repeated mention of the names of the favourites, and the privileges conferred upon them, were regarded with irritation and discontent, especially by the princes of Guise. Many of the nobles, moreover, could ill afford the expenses consequent on the alteration of their state costumes. The Huguenot nobles preferred grievous complaints of the neglect which they had experienced at court, especially since the commencement of the year 1584, and presented a petition of remonstrance to his majesty. Their exclusion, however, from all lucrative offices had been preconcerted by the king as one means of discouraging the spread of the reformed doctrines. These cavaliers were

[1] His majesty permits and commands that MM. les ducs de Joyeuse and d'Epernon be allowed to the king's apartments whenever they please, at all hours and opportunities. "Les Règlements faict par le Roy le 1er Janvier, 1585, pour l'ordre qu'il veut estre gardé en son conseil et en sa maison."—Archives Curieuses de l'Histoire de France, tome x., 1er série.

silenced by a notification that it was the royal intention for the future to bestow judicial employ or court offices on individuals only of recognized orthodoxy. A thousand quibbles were also invented to annoy the ministers of the reformed faith in the various towns where their functions had been permitted by edict. When petitions of redress were presented by the aggrieved parties, no reparation was given; in short, it was universally proclaimed that the king, now watchful as well as orthodox, had determined to favour no one who held himself aloof and alien from the fold of the true church.

Despite these orthodox demonstrations, the Parisians persisted, at the suggestion of the Guisards, in attributing heretical inclinations to the king. Coarse engravings were exhibited in certain localities representing the martyrdom of the English Romanists. The exhibitor of these pictures stood by them wand in hand, and explained the scene; to the more ardent and credulous he adroitly intimated that like tragedies would desecrate the French metropolis after the accession of Henri de Navarre. Henry ordered the seizure of these pictures and the destruction of their blocks. After a domiciliary search in the most disaffected quarters of the city, the blocks were found hidden in a closet in an upper chamber of the hôtel de Guise. Scarcely was this scandal put down when a large picture painted on wood was exhibited in the churchyard of St. Severin, representing queen Elizabeth in grotesque attire surveying the burning of some half-dozen Papists, the pile being kept ablaze by hideous demons brandishing pitchforks. The English ambassador insisting that this picture should be forthwith confiscated and destroyed, the king wrote a letter with his own hand, dated from Meaux, to the first president of the parliament of Paris ordering that such should be done.[1]

[1] Lettre de Henri III. au premier Président de Paris pour faire ôter

From the pulpits of the capital the most seditious and treasonable harangues emanated. The turbulent *curés* of Paris, all, with few exceptions, in the pay of the princes of Guise, indulged in stinging satires on the conduct of their king. They accused him of atheism, negligent security, tyranny, and of vices too odious to be named. The duc de Guise and the cardinal de Bourbon, they termed "holy and acceptable to the Lord, the chosen, the defenders of the faith, and the hope of benighted France." The diatribes delivered by the monk Poncet from the pulpit of Notre Dame before crowded congregations outraged public decency. Jean Prevost at St. Severin edified his hearers by abusive orations against the king of Navarre and queen Elizabeth. At the church of St. Germain, Jacques Cueuilly defamed the reigning dynasty, under the special sanction and from the pulpit of one of the churches of his superior the miserable old cardinal de Bourbon. The church of St. Benôit rang with the furious declamation of Jean Boucher against the future accession of a heretic dynasty. In short, since the days of Noël Béda never had harangues so rancorous been heard by the citizens of Paris as those which were now howled forth by the irascible *curés* of the capital.

Henry proceeded from Meaux to Lyons to receive the duc d'Epernon on his return.[1] As soon as the favourite had recovered a slight hurt from a fall from his horse,[2] the king suddenly declared his intention of paying the cardinal de Bourbon a visit at the Château de Gaillon, in Normandy. The king now revelled in the perpetration of these sudden surprises; "*ils me*

de la cloître de St. Severin un tableaux injurieux à la Reyne d'Angleterre. MS. Béth. 8897, fol. 370, Bibl. Imp.

[1] The duc d'Epernon was popular amongst the court party in Lyons; and the vivas with which they greeted his entry into the castle where the king resided caused his horse to spring suddenly aside and unseat his rider.

font connoître mon monde," said his majesty. Accordingly the visit was paid, and the cardinal received his sovereign with great outward deference, for, in truth, never had the idea occurred to his Eminence that the duc de Guise might possibly entertain designs personally hostile to the king. One day, while walking in the delicious pleasaunce appertaining to the castle, Henry suddenly accosted the cardinal in these words: "Mon cousin, you perceive that God has not given me children, nor am I likely, it is said, to have heirs; my crown, therefore, will fall into your house of Bourbon. I am told, however, that you are disposed to dispute the succession with your nephew the king of Navarre." "Sire," replied the cardinal, "I pray God to take me before your majesty—an event very probable and natural."—"Yes," replied the king; "but if it should not so please the Almighty to act, shall you contest the crown with your nephew?"—"Sire, in that case, I hold that my own claims seem beyond competition. I, therefore, should dispute the crown with my nephew, very resolute, moreover, not to cede it to him." The king laughed, as he surveyed the bent and aged figure of his kinsman, and patting him condescendingly on the shoulder, exclaimed, "Va, mon bon ami, le Châtelet vous donneroit la couronne, mais la Cour vous l'ôteroit!"[1] the sarcasm of which comment the cardinal failed to comprehend.[2] After a sojourn of some days at Gaillon, during which the king could not detect any mutinous intent in the superbly ordered household of his kinsman, his majesty took leave and journeyed to Blois, where the two queens gave him the rendezvous. Soon after

[1] This somewhat obscure *bon mot* of Henry III. meant that the crown might possibly be given to the cardinal by the Châtelet—*i. e.*, the rogues and vagabonds of Paris—but that the nobles and great officers of the realm would soon despoil him of it.

[2] Fontanieu: Note—Bibl. Imp. p. 358.

Catherine wrote to the duchesse de Nemours to announce his majesty's safe arrival, and the reconciliation of the royal pair; but that in consequence of the plague having appeared in the town of Blois and carried off one of the maidens of queen Louise, the court was about to remove for the winter to St. Germain, greatly to the chagrin of the king, who had desired to spend some months away from the cabals of his capital. "The king my son arrived here in good health, looking well in the face, and fat. The queen his consort is also well, but very weakly; nevertheless, since the return of the king her majesty's face looks much plumper and more joyous than it has ever done since her marriage." Catherine gives an improved account of her own health, though she complains of her sufferings from gout in her left arm.[1]

The return of the king to his capital was, despite his repugnance, an event of urgent necessity. His enemies were gathering and organizing their hosts; and that hostile confederation with Spain, the existence of which until now had been stealthily whispered, became, ere the year closed, recorded on parchment, and boldly authenticated by the sign-manual of its leaders.

The sudden visit of king Henry to Gaillon, and the hints he had there been so lavish of respecting his kinsman's proceedings, seemed to sever the last lingering feeling of shame and reluctance which had restrained the cardinal de Bourbon from publicly contesting with his nephew for the title of heir-presumptive. Consequently at the close of the year 1584 Paris beheld monseigneur de Bourbon emerge from his retreat at Gaillon clad in the habit of a cavalier, and affect the

[1] La Reyne Catherine de Medici à Madame de Nemours. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 1858, fol. 116, MS. In speaking of the plague, Catherine says: "Dieu nous fait bien sentir de ses verges; je luy supplie avoir pitié de nous et de cet pauvre royaume."—Datée Octobre 18, 1584.

rakish airs of the most roué noble of the court. Previously he had signed a petition to the holy see to be released from his priestly vows, in order, as he said, that "he might marry and bring up orthodox heirs to wear the crown of St. Louis." If a papal dispensation could be obtained, the cardinal further declared himself not averse to espouse the termagant duchesse de Montpensier, Catherine de Lorraine.[1] The king, the parliament, and the people at length found a point of unanimity in the extravagant mirth excited by the cardinal's declaration and projects. The duc de Guise and his kindred, however, gravely applauded; and the cardinal made his first essay in his new character of heir-presumptive by sending an envoy to their family conference about to be holden at the castle of Joinville. Here there were assembled the ducs de Guise and de Mayenne, a Spanish envoy, Juan Baptista Taxis, Mendoza the ambassador, also gentlemen sent by the cardinal de Guise and the ducs d'Aumale and d'Elbœuf as their representatives. The object and point to be debated was a great treaty with Spain, intended as the *résumé* of all that had been mooted at Péronne in 1558, and between don John of Austria and the duc de Guise in 1577. The contracting parties commenced by acknowledging the cardinal de Bourbon as the legitimate successor to the crown, and that in the event of the demise of Henry III. his claims should be enforced against that of any other competitor. *One faith alone was to be tolerated in France.* No future alliance was to be contracted with the Sublime Porte. The king of Spain agreed to furnish the confederates with the

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxxi. p. 273.—Mém. du Duc de Nevers, p. 631, et seq. The duc de Guise paid a furtive visit to the Sorbonne—that hotbed of sedition and bigotry—and put the searching question to MM. les Sorbonnists, "s'ils étoient assez forts avec la plume! et sinon, qu'il le falloit être avec l'épée!"

monthly sum of 50,000 crowns; and, furthermore, to send them troops and money as necessity might dictate. It was stipulated that Cambray should be restored to the Spanish crown; and in the event of the succession of the cardinal de Bourbon to the throne of France, he covenanted to repay to the king of Spain all the moneys advanced for the furtherance of the cause. Foreign potentates might be invited to join this League; but no peace or negotiation was to be entered into singly by any of the contracting powers. It was also agreed to hold this convention secret, and not to proclaim it except by common consent. The treaty was signed by don Juan de Taxis, by Mayenne, and the duc de Guise; and spaces were left for the signatures of the cardinal de Bourbon, the ducs de Mercœur and Nevers, Aumale, and Elbœuf. Its ratification by all parties was to be completed by the month of March of the following year, and the taking up of arms regulated by the posture of religious and political affairs.

That period, however, was nearer at hand than the confederates supposed.

The deputies of the States of Holland, who had long and patiently waited the royal pleasure, at length received permission to enter Paris. The embassy had been detained at Senlis, where, though it received every honourable treatment, the approach of the deputies nearer to the court had been forbidden. The prince of Orange during this interval had been assassinated at Delft by Balthazar Gerard,[1] an emissary of the duke of Parma, who was still pursuing the sieges of Antwerp and Brussels. When the Spanish ambassador Mendoza learned that Henry had decided to hear the harangues of the revolted subjects of Spain, and to

[1] The prince of Orange was shot by Gerard, July 10th, 1584, and died immediately after his wound in the presence of the princess his wife, and madame de Schwarzenburg his sister.

take their overtures into consideration, his rage and consternation were boundless. Opposed by the alliance of France and England the duke of Parma, he knew, must find himself compelled to raise the siege of Antwerp, and liberate again the elements of strife and rebellion over the Flemish territory so hardly re-conquered. Mendoza, therefore, repaired to St. Germain, and reproached Henry in a tone of insolent audacity for his hostile proceeding. He threatened his majesty with the vengeance of the Catholic king, "that prince so powerful and fortunate, whom no person defied with impunity." Finally, he exhorted Henry to dismiss the deputies from his realm, and to restore Cambray if his majesty held the welfare of his own realm at heart. The overbearing tone of this admonition irritated the king. "M. l'ambassadeur," replied he, with spirit, "I do not regard the Flemish people as rebels and traitors; I hold them to be a people unfortunate and oppressed. This nation has always been distinguished for the generous ardour with which it espouses the cause of the unfortunate; France is the asylum of the oppressed. I have further to inform you that the king of France heeds neither threats nor insinuations; nor will he be hindered from extending protection to an afflicted people similar to that which in all ages it was the glory of his ancestors to afford."[1]

The deputies, therefore, arrived in Paris at the beginning of February, 1585. The king granted them public audience in the presence of Catherine and the court. They then retired privately to submit their proposals to the king. These offers were of the most advantageous nature. The States offered to assign twelve towns to be garrisoned by French troops, and to pay into Henry's exchequer the monthly sum of

[1] De Thou, liv. lxxxi. Aubigné: Hist. Universelle. Dupleix: Petite Chronique aux Mém. de Nevers, tome i.

100,000 crowns for the costs of the war. Henry replied with great majesty and affability: he gave no decisive answer, but promised to advise with his council on the proposition. He meanwhile assigned the deputies lodging in a suburb of Paris and a magnificent entertainment at the national expense.

The following week queen Elizabeth's ambassador extraordinary, lord Derby,[1] arrived in Paris. His public mission was to present the insignia of the Garter to king Henry; his private errand to exhort the king to accept the offers of the States of Holland, to avenge the treacherous assassination of the prince of Orange, and by carrying war into the Low Countries to cripple the resources of the king of Spain and to frustrate his league with French Catholics. Elizabeth counselled Henry to send the king of Navarre or Condé as generalissimo of the armies of France; "Your subjects, sire," said lord Derby, "will then have other foes to combat than their own countrymen!" The most extraordinary honours were paid to the English ambassador. The court went out to meet and escort him into Paris. The hôtel d'Anjou was assigned to him for a residence, where, during his sojourn of twenty days in Paris, he was entertained at the cost of the crown.[2] On Thursday, the last day of February, 1585, Henry was invested with the collar of the Garter in the church of the Augustinians, in the presence of the knights du St. Esprit, the foreign ambassadors, and of the obnoxious Flemish envoys. His majesty afterwards

[1] Much confusion exists as to the name of Elizabeth's ambassador: De Thou asserts that he was lord Derby; the imperial ambassador states that the ambassador was lord Herbert; the author of le Journal de Henri III. testifies that the envoy was lord Warwick. The ambassador, however, was, as de Thou states, Henry Stanley, lord Derby.

[2] "Le prétexte specieux de son ambassade," says the imperial ambassador, "est de porter au roi les riches ornaments de l'ordre de la Jarretière; mais son véritable motif est la guerre de Flandre."

entertained the ambassador and his suite at a sumptuous banquet.[1] The following day Henry granted a second audience to the ambassadors of the States in the presence of the earl and his colleagues. The conference was long and secret. Elizabeth offered to contribute a third of the expenses of the war, and to furnish a contingent of 5,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry. The ambassadors went afterwards to the Tuileries to pay their respects to queen Catherine. Her majesty received them very graciously, and even expressed her desire that her son should accept the protectorate offered to him. De Thou, however, whose position and penetration enabled him to discern the true and private motives of the personages concerned in the great drama then enacting, declares that the queen spoke against her convictions; for that since the demise of the duc d'Anjou she had felt no interest in the affairs of the Low Countries. He even represents her majesty's mental argument to have been thus:—"If foreign war should be declared, the generals of the armies will monopolize all power and consideration; but a civil war would restore me to that plenitude of authority which was mine during twenty years of my life." The arguments employed by the English ambassador, and the powerful co-operation offered by Elizabeth, made great impression on the king. He therefore sent for the duc de Joyeuse, and asked his advice immediately after the ambassadors quitted the palace. The duke discouraged the proposed campaign, and drew a terrible picture of the calamities likely to ensue from a breach with the Spanish court. The alliance of Joyeuse with

[1] After the banquet 120 ladies and cavaliers danced a ballet, the cost of which was 20,000 crowns. The entertainment lasted from ten until three in the morning. The king, furthermore, presented lord Derby with several gold vases, estimated to have cost 4,000 gold crowns. The ambassador took his leave on the 14th of March, 1585.—Lettre de Busbecq à l'Empereur Rodolphe II.

the house of Lorraine, at every opportunity industriously paraded by his rival Epernon, had much diminished the weight of his counsels in the estimation of the king. Highly dissatisfied, therefore, with this blunt response, Henry next appealed to Epernon and the bishop of Acqs, François de Noailles, one of the greatest diplomatists of the age, who had ably served Gallic interests at the courts of England and Constantinople and the Venetian republic. The duc d'Epernon, who hated the princes of Lorraine, and between whom and the duc de Guise a violent feud existed,[1] exhorted the king to accept the overtures of the States and the alliance of England. Such also was the counsel of the bishop of Acqs, who addressed the king in an eloquent oration showing the danger of the realm, and exhorting his majesty at this crisis to remember the avowals of Salzedo and to anticipate the treachery of his enemies.[2] While Henry deliberated instead of at once acting on this sage advice, his enemies forestalled him—possibly at the suggestion of the queen-mother, who abhorred the project of a foreign war which would place her hated son-in-law at the head of the armies of France, and for the time restore the ascendency of Protestant counsels. Catherine maintained an active correspondence with all the princes of Lorraine, even when their hostile intents began to be the subject of public discussion. The eldest daughter of the duc de Lorraine, madame Christine, was the constant companion, and often the amanuensis, of the queen-mother, who had educated the princess from her earliest youth. It was prince Henry of Lorraine—the elder son of her daughter Claude and the brother of Christine—for whom Catherine intrigued and tacitly sanctioned those enterprises

[1] "Jean Louis de Nogaret, duc d'Epernon, n'avoit point moins de haine pour le duc, qu'il n'en étoit haï lui même."—De Thou, liv. lxxxi.

[2] See the bishop's eloquent oration—De Thou, liv. lxxxi. p. 300.

which overthrew the throne of her son, the reigning king. The Spanish ambassador Mendoza, moreover, received despatch after despatch from the duke of Parma, urgently calling upon him to exhort the duc de Guise *to act*, as the menaced alliance between France England, and Holland would overthrow the Spanish sovereignty in the Low Countries and compel him to raise the siege of Antwerp. Mendoza, therefore, proceeded to Joinville and obtained an interview with the duc de Guise.

The mind of Guise, since the signature of the treaty of Joinville,[1] had been torn by conflicting emotions of loyalty, honour, self-interest, and resentment. His zeal for the faith prompted him to take up arms to oppose the recognition of a heretic heir presumptive. His indignation at the slights he had experienced from the king; and especially that, after faithfully serving Henry during the bloody episode of St. Bartholomew's day, the cold disregard of the sovereign should appear to affix the crime and the responsibility of that fell deed on the house of Lorraine, all conspired to harden the duke in his meditated rebellion. Henry had, moreover, frustrated his matrimonial projects, and had refused him scope for the exercise of his military and diplomatic abilities. Mendoza further drew a humiliating picture of the duke's probable position in case war were declared against Spain. "Monseigneur, Navarre, Condé, Epernon, and others your deadly foes, will be winning laurels and undermining the legitimate influence of your most Catholic house of Lorraine-Guise; and you, hated by the king,—where will you be?—Disgraced, and with no other resource than the cultivation of this your domain of Joinville!"

[1] The treaty of Joinville was signed the last day of December, 1584. A copy had been sent to Philip II. A second copy remained in the hands of the Leaguers.

Mendoza then adjured the duke to proclaim himself the champion of the holy Roman faith; and to take up arms for the avowed purpose of extorting an edict decreeing the abolition of the reformed ritual, the banishment of its ministers, and the recognition of that most Catholic prince, monseigneur de Bourbon, as the heir of the crown. The Spanish minister took care to dwell complacently on the great age of the old cardinal; "thus, at any rate," added he, "the reign of the said cardinal will be brief and one of transition, for the bringing in of a glorious and orthodox dynasty!" Mendoza, during the first portion of his interview, had presumed to urge the obedience of the duke by the menace of betraying his projects to the council of state, by placing a draft of the treaty of Joinville in the hands of the king; but the cool irony and self-possession of Guise compelled him quickly to assume a more insinuating demeanour.[1]

The duc de Guise, nevertheless, moved by these considerations, and being thoroughly persuaded that a war with Spain would dissipate his projects of aggrandizement and reform, and consign him to obscurity, took the fatal resolution of commencing the first campaign of the League. He, therefore, wrote letters to Pheffer, the most noted of the Swiss mercenary chieftains, and whom the duke had long suborned, to bring him the levies previously resolved between them. M. de Bassompierre and an officer named Othon Plat, had for some months before been secretly engaged in recruiting throughout Germany. To them, therefore, the duke wrote commands to advance to the frontiers with their levies. The majority of the nobles of Champagne and Burgundy, and of Picardy, on the rumour of these transactions, declared themselves ready to join the

[1] Davila, tome ii. lib. 7. Mém. de la Ligue, tome i. De Thou, liv. lxxxi.

standard of Guise, their allegiance having been too long tampered with by the operations of the League, to restrain them from responding to the expected summons of the popular chieftain. Assemblies were holden throughout the provinces to applaud the duke's designs and to give every possible publicity to his manifestoes; and the most tumultuous scenes occurred in many districts. "These said Guises," wrote the imperial ambassador,[1] "have now so won on the favour and confidence of the people, that it is a common thing to hear individuals remark that they would rather obey them than the king. The disaffection of these Guises arises from several causes, the first of which is jealousy. They cannot brook the indignity of seeing others preferred by the king, and laden with benefactions; while they are suffered to be crushed beneath the weight of debts contracted for the weal of the state in times of yore. Moreover, they suspect that the duc d'Epernon is to marry the sister of the king of Navarre, a rich and potent heiress; and that in favour of this alliance, the king is about to create the said Epernon constable of France; and that the king will be therefore reconciled with the king of Navarre, and maintain his just pretensions to the succession." The cardinal de Bourbon, meanwhile, secretly received deputies from the League of Picardy at Gaillon, who after formally recognising his claim to the succession, escorted him in triumph to Peronne, where he entered into the closest relations with the duc de Guise.

The king abandoned himself to transports of anger and grief on learning the sudden outbreak of the rebel-

[1] Lettre 49. "Le roy," says Cheverny, "étoit du natural fatal de la race des Valois, qui ont toujours à la fin maltraité ceux qu'ils ont aimés—voïr les sieurs de Lignerolles, Bellegarde, du Guast, St. Luc, Villequier, Beauvais-Nangis, et enfin MM. de Guise, qu'il avait tant aimé en jeunesse."—MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. fol. 168.

lion. His condition was most forlorn: he found himself without an army, without funds, and without popularity. Princes of his own lineage betrayed his throne: not a single Catholic noble could be relied upon; to say nothing of that numerous band of his most potent subjects alienated by previous ill usage. The parliaments of the provinces of the realm debated whether they should not openly join the confederation. The majority of the large towns sent deputies to the duc de Guise; the rest, though nominally faithful, refused to receive garrisons. The duc de Mercœur, brother of the queen, joined the standard of Guise with large reinforcements; the duc de Nevers quitted Paris, as he asserted, to consult the pope on the lawfulness of the association. Orleans pronounced for the duke, and Caen followed the same example. The king, in this emergency, sent an express to Joinville, to inquire of the princes of Guise their intentions, designs, and grievances.[1] The duc de Guise replied, "that it was not his intention to take up arms against the person of his sovereign, and that he should ever demean himself as his majesty's humble servant; moreover, he prayed the king not to put faith in the mischievous reports disseminated to his disadvantage."[2] Henry, thereupon, published an edict remitting taxes to the amount of 150,000 crowns, and prohibiting levies of any kind throughout the realm; at the same time he ordered the disbandment of such regiments as had not been levied for the royal service. If any refused obedience to the mandate, Henry directed the *tocsin* to be rung in the nearest town, and a general onslaught to be made for

[1] The king sent Maintenon to the duc de Guise, M. de Rochefort to the duc de Mayenne, and M. de la Mothe Fénélon to the cardinal de Bourbon.—Journal de Henri III.

[2] Busbecq: Lettre 48.

the destruction of the rebels. He next sent directions to Fleury, his ambassador to the Cantons, to raise levies of Swiss troops, and despatched Schomberg, comte de Nanteuil, into Germany for the same purpose. As the latter passed through the dominions of the duc de Lorraine, he was audaciously arrested by order of the duke, to be detained until some signal success of the confederates and the king's consequent concessions might render Schomberg's recruiting of no avail for the present campaign.

The measures of the duc de Guise were rapid and imposing.[1] No dilatory delays nor misgivings impeded his advance. Having staked all on the perilous venture of civil war, he remembered and acted upon the maxim of Farnese duke of Parma, that "he who draws the sword against his sovereign ought at the same time, if he hopes for success, to throw away its scabbard."

The first enterprises of the confederates were made on the towns of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, which places the duc de Guise had covenanted to cede to the duc de Lorraine as the price of the adherence of the latter to the League. Toul and Verdun were speedily captured;[2] but the garrison of Metz, reinforced by the wise prevision of the duc d'Epernon its governor, was enabled to make so threatening a demonstration that the surprise of the city was not attempted. The armies of the confederates received daily reinforcements; 3,000 *reiters*, and the same number of Swiss troops, joined the duc de Guise at Rouvray before the end of May. The cardinal de

[1] "Le duc de Guise prétend être en droit de prendre les armes, de s'opposer aux faiblesses du roi, et de défendre la religion; le cardinal de Bourbon s'est déclaré en leur faveur contre les intérêts de sa maison." Ibid.

[2] "Le duc de Guise s'est emparé de Toul et de Verdun sans aucune résistance. On croit que Lyons et Nantes ont quitté son parti."—Dépêches de Busbecq.

Bourbon, during these transactions, published a Declaration.[1] In this document the cardinal had the audacity to profess the most devoted loyalty towards the person of the sovereign: he declared that the overthrow of heresy was the sole reason for the taking up of arms; and he invited the king, as chief of the League he had signed at Blois, to reconcile himself with the duc de Guise, and to head the armies of the League. Mingled with this adulation, however, M. de Bourbon, by the advice of his colleagues, contrived to administer some unpalatable rebukes likely to inflame the people. He deplored the dilapidation of the finances, the misgovernment, and the luxury of the sovereign; the cause, as he asserted, of the woes which afflicted the realm. The question of the succession was modestly and distantly alluded to, that the disinterestedness of the allies might shine the more conspicuously. The manifesto wound up with a magnificent eulogium on the queen-mother, "to whose indefatigable labours, which I myself have shared, France owes her salvation, and our holy religion its preservation." This Declaration was forwarded to the king. A second manifesto, however, simultaneously appeared without signature, filled with the most scurrilous libels relative to the proceedings of the court. These two documents Henry condescended to answer, and actually entered into a defence of his past conduct: he pathetically implored his subjects to beware of the snares laid for them by designing men; and assured all classes of his people that, in the royal wisdom and clemency, they would find more than the realization of their desires.[2]

[1] Mém. de la Ligue (édition de l'Abbé Goujet), tome i. p. 56, et seq.: Déclaration des choses qui ont mis M. le cardinal de Bourbon et les princes de s'opposer à ceux qui par tous les moyens s'efforcent de subvertir la réligion Catholique, etc.—De Thou, liv. lxxxi.

[2] Davila, tome xi. Mém. de la Ligue.

The king of Navarre, meantime, sent envoys to Paris to offer his majesty a large reinforcement of troops, and his own services. The duc d'Epernon, ever the staunch friend of Henri de Navarre, counselled the king to accept the offer, and to place himself at the head of his army. "Instead of writing indifferent manifestoes, your majesty should act," exclaimed the audacious favourite. Unable to induce the king to take this decisive step, Epernon in disgust himself departed for Metz, the garrison of which he strengthened; he then returned and took the field, at the head of a gallant troop of young nobles, for the defence of the capital, and subsequently defeated several detachments of the army of the League in the neighbourhood of Gien. The duc de Montpensier, at the suggestion of Epernon and by the king's orders, departed for Brétagne, where the duc de Mercœur was engaged in openly enrolling troops for the confederates, and, after several severe skirmishes, the former succeeded in disbanding the Leaguers. The duc de Joyeuse received the royal commands to proceed to Beaugency and arrest the progress of the duc d'Elbœuf, whose mercenaries were ravaging the country and committing atrocious acts of rapine. These the temporary successes of the royal arms over bands of newly levied militia compensated not for the spirit of disaffection everywhere prevalent. At Lyons the populace rose and destroyed the citadel, at the old cry of heresy, incited to this treasonable outrage by Mandelot the governor, who was disaffected because, by the advice of Epernon, a new and trusty commandant had been appointed to the citadel.[1] At Marseilles a dan-

[1] The duc d'Epernon insisted that Mandelot should be chastised for his insubordination. The latter, however, had an only daughter, whom, to save himself, Mandelot offered in marriage to the son of Villeroy. The astute secretary, therefore, wrung a pardon from his infatuated sovereign, and accepted the proposal of the hand of the wealthy heiress.

gerous conspiracy to yield that important place to the Leaguers was frustrated, after great bloodshed and commotion, by the loyal valour of Bouquier, an opulent merchant.[1] During this crisis Henry remained at the Louvre, occupied in futile plans for the fortification of Paris. His majesty himself twice a day visited the gates of the town and showed himself to the people. The rest of his time was spent in the practice of the most austere penances and fasts, occasionally enlivened by a magnificent carouse for his courtiers, and a final masquerade and ball for the personal delectation of his majesty.

The duc de Guise proceeded on the 2nd day of April, 1585, at the head of 12,000 men to Châlons-sur-Marne, which place he had captured and selected for his head-quarters, and for the junction of his levies. From thence he repaired to Peronne to pay his respects to the cardinal de Bourbon, and to conduct him to Châlons. This old prelate, fully believing that France had armed in his cause, assumed the most condescending demeanour, and expressed the highest gratification at his pompous progress from Peronne to Châlons. No misgiving arose in the mind of the cardinal as to the permanency of his honours, as he glanced on the banner of Guise, borne at the van of his escort, with its proud blazon of eaglets, and significant motto, "Châcun à son tour."

The designs of Guise had so far succeeded that war again everywhere convulsed the realm. The duke, nevertheless, thought it prudent to give a semblance of legality to his proceedings by compelling the co-operation of the king himself in his projects. Hence the arrest of Schomberg, to prevent the entry into France of royal levies; and the concentration of the armies of the League at Châlons to awe the defenceless monarch,

[1] Mém. de la Ligue, tome i. Papon: Hist. de Provence, tome iv. p. 250.

and to render him anxious for a compromise. The Huguenot leaders were marshalling their armies to fight, if requisite, for their unfortunate king, in defiance, even, of the express commands he had been in his dire emergency persuaded to transmit to the south.[1] The duc de Montmorency, orthodox in his faith, and *de facto* king of Languedoc, had as yet made no intimation of his sentiments on the summary proceedings of the princes of Lorraine. In the bosom of Elizabeth of England a flame of Tudor wrath had been kindled when she beheld the mode in which the king was beset; and she forthwith despatched an envoy to Paris to offer Henry a succour of 6,000 English or Swiss troops to be maintained at her own expense. She counselled the king to place the king of Navarre at the head of his armies, and speedily to bring the traitors to the block. Another alloy to the almost unprecedented success which had attended the enterprises of the League during the short space of one month was the partial defection of the duc de Nevers, who, nevertheless, though he declined to aid the confederates, yet equally held himself aloof from the councils of his sovereign. The duke, on the first organization of the League in 1577, declared that he would not bear arms against king Henry unless previously authorized by the pope. M. de Nevers hoped one day to succeed to the duchy of Mantua, as his brother the duke had no male heir; consequently, the divine right of sovereign rulers, and the sacred inviolability of their persons, were principles which he ardently maintained. The design of the Leaguers had been to bestow the government of Provence on Nevers; but the failure of the enterprise on Marseilles having frustrated that project, the duke forthwith repaired to

[1] "Le roi ne scait de quel côté tourner; il se voit environné d'ennemis ouverts, et il n'a auprès de sa personne que peu d'amis foibles et impuissans."—Busbecq, Lettre à l'Empereur Rodolphe II.

Rome to consult the sovereign pontiff, to whom he was introduced by the cardinal de Pellvé. Sixtus V., however, more intent on hanging his Roman brigands than interested in the feuds of France, which throughout his pontificate he distrusted as tending more to individual aggrandizement than to the welfare of Holy Church, coldly declined to grant the bull necessary to tranquillize the tender conscience of the duke. Neither would his Holiness vouchsafe a special dispensation; nor would he even deposit in the hands of the legate at Avignon a brief, eulogizing generally the zeal of his faithful sons.[1] He, however, privately owned that the motives and objects of the League were holy, laudable, and legitimate; but that publicly to sanction the rebellion of subjects against their sovereign was an admission, considering the troubled condition of Europe, which sound policy forbade. The duc de Nevers, therefore, wrote to the cardinal de Bourbon, and withdrawing his active support from the League, retired with his consort to his castle at Nevers.

The emissaries of the Spanish ambassador, who still boldly presented himself in the saloons of the Louvre, presently caused the rumour to be circulated that the duc de Guise and M. de Bourbon were not averse to an accommodation, provided that the king vouchsafed some notable Catholic demonstration. This hope Henry seized with avidity, despite the representations of the duc d'Epernon, whose valour and judgment at this perilous crisis cannot be too highly lauded. He im-

[1] Throughout his pontificate Sixtus behaved in the most disdainful manner to the Leaguers, reprimanding their chieftains, and indulging his spleen by the utterance of the most spiteful taunts. The deceased pope, Gregory XIII., held the League in the utmost distrust, as tending to the overthrow of sovereign power. A few hours only before his death he said to the cardinal d'Este, nephew of the duchesse de Nemours, "La Ligue n'aura pas de moi ny bulle ni bref jusqu'à ce que je voye plus clair en ses brouilleries."

plored his royal master to make no terms with the rebels until they had laid down arms; to maintain the majesty of his crown; and to call in the aid of the valiant armies of the south. This judicious counsel, the adoption of which at this period probably would have saved the crown, Henry rejected, partly actuated by his hatred towards the Huguenots, and partly by a craven fear of the privations and vicissitudes of war. He therefore appealed to the queen his mother for counsel, who fearing that the closeness of her relations with the princes of Guise might cause her to be suspected by her son, had hitherto maintained a grave and reserved demeanour; besides, she appreciated the fervency of Epernon's hate. Catherine sighed, shed tears, and murmured the one word, her palladium—negotiate!

In pursuance of this policy, therefore, the queen quitted Paris about the commencement of June, 1585, to confer with the duc de Guise at Châlons-sur-Marne. Her majesty was attended by M. de Lansac, by the archbishop of Lyons, and by Brulard, under-secretary of state. Villeroy had likewise been designated to accompany the queen; but, apprehensive of the results of this negotiation, he contrived to be excused, out of regard for his future prosperity and repute.

The deportment of the duc de Guise was consummate in its dexterity. Too often, during the varied vicissitudes of his reign, Henry discovered the genius and aptitude of individuals amongst his subjects only when their ability had become the scourge of his misrule. Confident in his own resources and strength, the duc de Guise consulted few. The duc de Nevers was the chief depositary of his designs; with the former he had now no rivalry in arms; while the moral support which Nevers, by an ingenious subterfuge, believed himself authorized to afford to the League, became of immense

value in the duke's esteem. Guise also frequently corresponded with the duchesse de Nevers, who, now an ardent Leaguer, organized—with the duchesses de Montpensier, Guise and Nemours—that feminine *clique* before whose weapons of animosity and flaying sarcasm so many reputations fell. As for the cardinal de Bourbon, he found himself surrounded by obsequious homage: the duke treated him almost with regal honours, and never addressed him save with cap in hand. The bold troopers of the army, puzzled at the veneration demonstrated towards the prelate, bestowed upon him the title of "grand duc de Bourbon;" while Guise in his private correspondence, written in cypher, contemptuously termed the cardinal "*le petit homme.*"[1]

It was not without some apprehension that Guise contemplated the approaching interview between the queen and the cardinal de Bourbon—for long habits of intimacy had firmly established Catherine's ascendency over the weak mind of the prelate—and he even tried to persuade the latter to retire to Peronne. But the cardinal had fallen into anguish and much tribulation of spirit, lest, perhaps, his royal patroness after all might disapprove his proceedings; and he obstinately declined to forego the interview.

The negotiation at length commenced at Epernay, by the duke simply tendering to the queen, on behalf of himself and his colleagues of the League, the following terms:—The proscription of the Protestants from the realm, who were to be despoiled of their offices, dignities, and lands, and banished from the kingdom within one month of the publication of the edict. Permission might be accorded to them to sell during the interval their lands and possessions. All heretics were formally to be declared incapable of inheriting lands or dignities, or of holding any office in the realm. The concession

[1] The Huguenots gave the cardinal the soubriquet of "*Ane rouge.*"

of this clause was the virtual recognition of the designs of the duc de Guise on the throne. The king of Navarre and the prince de Condé proclaimed incompetent to claim the royal succession when it lapsed by the demise of the king without direct heirs, there only remained an old cardinal, two cadets of the house of Condé, and the duc de Montpensier to oppose the power and pretensions of the princes of Lorraine. The king was further to agree to employ all the forces of the realm in this crusade against the heretics to drive them from the land, and to confiscate the great fiefs in their tenure—a clause especially launched against the king of Navarre. Catherine at first raised many objections to these conditions, and declared that the royal power would not suffice to execute them. The duc de Guise replied that the mode to execute such was the king's concern and not his own; nevertheless, to demonstrate further his disinterestedness, he proposed to add a clause to the treaty, to the effect "that all the nobles, members of the League, when once the pre-eminence of the orthodox faith was achieved, would willingly covenant to resign their honours and dignities, if such were the king's pleasure." The royal physician Miron was employed as the medium of communication between the queen and her son, and made, in this capacity, many journeys to Paris. The duc de Nevers, meantime, had repaired a second time to Rome to sound again the inclinations of the pope, feeling the onerous position in which the chieftains of the League were placed, who having taken arms in defence of the faith, beheld themselves disowned and slighted by the Holy See. Sixtus, whose despotic notions were sorely wounded by the defiance offered to the sovereign of France, received the duke very coldly: consequently the letters written by Nevers to the duc de Guise advocated the utmost moderation. "If you and the king in reality enter upon a

contest for preponderance, you will surely be the ruin the one of the other. God grant that my predictions may not be verified! but, monsieur, I believe what I assert as fully as if I witnessed it," wrote the duke.[1] The cardinal de Bourbon, also, whether uneasy at the silence of Rome, or somewhat diverted from his subserviency to the duc de Guise by the private admonitions of Catherine de Medici, showed some inclination to modify the articles presented for the ratification of the king. "I cannot express to you the changeableness and inconsistency of '*le petit homme*;' he has given me such trouble that at times I feel quite beside myself,"[2] wrote Guise in his turn to the duc de Nevers. But though all around seemed to waver, Guise firmly held his position, and having drawn his sword against his sovereign "and thrown away its scabbard," he refused to recede from conditions to obtain which he had armed. Levies continued to pour in on all sides. Spain advanced money to her champion; and the factious prelates of the Gallican church clamoured for war, and offered contributions to exterminate the foes of the Church. Henry, therefore, outwardly yielded, for Catherine wrote despondingly on the little impression which her representations had made on the duke. "Monsieur," wrote she to her son, "the said duke declares himself content personally, but as he has devoted himself to the public good, the public must be satisfied, and all the places given by you to the heretics of your realm as guarantees, the League re-demands." The queen states that to this speech she made reply, requesting the

[1] Mém. de Nevers, tome i. p. 677-678. The duke throughout his despatches describes the pope as being in a state of irascible excitement, his Holiness snubbing him without respite or mercy.

[2] Lettre du Duc de Guise au Duc de Nevers—MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8866, fol. 74. De Châlons, ce vii. de Juin, 1585.

duke to attend to his own affairs and leave the welfare of the realm to the care of those to whom it appertained. The duc d'Epernon, meanwhile, perceiving that the demands of Guise would eventually be conceded; and fearing lest his own exile might also be made a condition, prevailed upon the king to send him as the bearer of his assent to the proposed articles, which he was, moreover, to supervise. Catherine had removed from Epernay to Nemours, on account of its more salubrious site, and there Epernon found her majesty in much solicitude at the uncompromising deportment of the duc de Guise.[1] The treaty was eventually signed by the queen and the archbishop of Lyons, on the 20th day of June. It was ratified by the king on the 7th day of July following. Secret articles appended to the treaty bound the king to continue the war without interval, under the generals chosen by Guise commanding the same troops, to which those of his majesty were to be added. The king also engaged to cede to the Leaguers, as guarantees, the towns of Châlons, St. Dizier, Soissons, Rheims, St. Esprit, Dinan, Concq, Dijon, Verdun (in which Henry undertook to construct a citadel), and Toul. He likewise engaged to furnish the sum of 200,000 gold crowns for the payment of the levies made in defiance of his edicts by the duc de Guise. "A miserable and ignominious treaty," says a contemporary; "the king was on foot, the League on horseback; while his majesty's sack[2] was not proof against hard blows like the cuirasses of the Leaguers."

When Sixtus V. heard of the ratification of the

[1] Lettre de M. Pinart à M. Brulart. MS. Imp. F. de Béth. 8874, fol. 16. Lettre de M. Myron, Premier Medicin au Roi. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. 8874, fol. 40.

[2] In allusion to the garb of Henry's famous penitents de l'Annonciation de Notre Dame, see p. 320.

treaty of Nemours, he was lost in amaze. "I never should have believed," said his Holiness to the duc de Nevers, "that a prince outraged as the king of France has been, could have been *débonnair* enough to meet his rebels half way, and not only to pardon your acts of hostility, but to acknowledge them as deeds performed in his service. Also, that his majesty, to humour your said associates, enters into a war against his inclinations and best interests. God be praised, nevertheless, for all his mercies! But I exhort you not to abuse the clement forbearance of your sovereign," continued the fiery old pontiff. "Prove your gratitude for his clemency by renewed fidelity to his royal person. The treaty of Nemours, as you are aware, releases you all from a terrible predicament. Take heed, therefore, not to precipitate yourselves again into the same snare; but demonstrate to Europe that his majesty's Catholic and orthodox subjects are not in reality the persons against whom the recent edict ought to have been directed."[1]

When Philip II. heard of these Henry's pusillanimous concessions, he smiled in derision; for a much slighter defiance the heads of counts Egmont and Hoorne had rolled on the scaffold.

The war "des Trois Henris"[2] opened, however, by a brave defiance on the part of the proscribed prince. Henri de Navarre, when he heard of the signature of the treaty of Nemours, sent his glove in token of defiance to Henri de Lorraine, challenging him to mortal combat, that their pretensions to the crown of France

[1] Mém. de Nevers, tome i. p. 669. Lettre du Duc de Nevers à M. le Cardinal de Bourbon.

[2] The war was popularly so termed in allusion to the Christian names of the three chief antagonists, Henri roi de France, Henri duc de Guise, and Henri roi de Navarre.

—the true cause of the impending war—might be vindicated without further bloodshed. The duc de Guise courteously declined the combat, stating that he had no cause of personal quarrel against the king of Navarre; but that his taking up arms arose from motives purely patriotic, and in pursuance of his duty as a faithful son of God and the Church.

END OF VOL. II.

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